NEW

ASSASSINATIONS

THE MURDERS, PLOTS AND CONSPIRACIES THAT CHANGED HISTORY

WHO REALLY GUNNED DOWN **MALCOLM X?**

FROM THE MAKERS OF ALL ABOUT HISTORY

Digital Edition

FUTURE

THIRD EDITION

BRUTAL COUPS

FAILED ATTEMPTS

INSIDE THE PLOT TO KILL HITLER

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ALL ABOUT HISTORY

ASSASSINATIONS

Some events shock the world, others have irrevocably changed the course of human history. Delve into the murky world of coups, conspiracies and devious plots behind the most infamous murders. Whether the victims were powerful leaders, enemies of the state, outspoken activists or high-profile celebrities, the violent, sudden, and often very public nature of their deaths leaves a mark on our collective consciousness.

Few would forget where they were when the news broke about the devastating deaths of JFK or Martin Luther King, for example – regarded by millions across the world as heroes, taken too soon by depraved acts of violence. When people lose their idols, particularly those with the power and potential to make great change, it leaves many feeling robbed of a future that could have been.

While many assassinations are met with global outcry and mourning, this is not always the case. Eliminating one high-value target can turn the tide in the terrors of war. There have been many covert plots – such as those to kill Nazi official Reinhard Heydrich and Al-Qaeada leader Osama Bin Laden – that were seen as necessary evils for the greater good.

Read on to examine the accounts, evidence and lasting impacts of over 25 notorious assassinations, and discover the failed attempts that would set history on a completely different path.

FUTURE

ASSASSINATIONS

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Walt Cisco, Dallas Morning News

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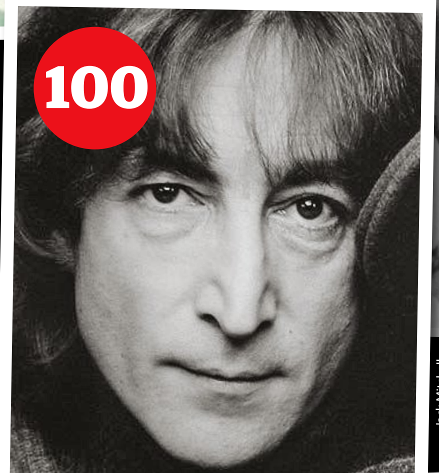
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Jack Mitchell

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> "After the Archduke's assassination, the world would never be the same again..."

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Assassinations across history

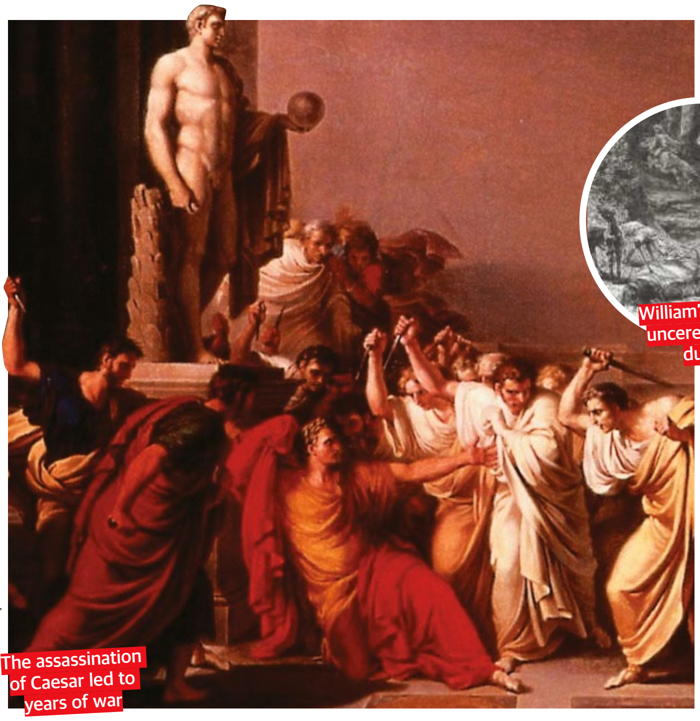
ET TU, BRUTE?

ROME 44 BCE

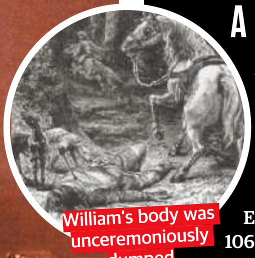
After Julius Caesar's rise to power as the dictator of Rome, he continued to accrue influence and privilege, sculpting the city and its institutions to his will and gaining control over the previously mighty Senate. However, his rule in Rome would be short-lived, as on the Ides of March, he was the victim of the world's most famous assassination.

Due to appear in a session of the Senate, Caesar arrived and was presented by Tillius Cimber with a petition to recall his exiled brother, with other conspirators gathering around to offer support. When Caesar tried to wave away and dismiss the senators, Cimber grabbed Caesar and pulled down his tunic while fellow assassin Servilius Casca produced a dagger and lunged at the dictator.

Caesar reportedly shouted "Casca, you villain, what are you doing?" Casca, who was now struggling with Caesar, quickly entreated his fellow assassins by shouting "Help, brother!", a cue that then led to almost 60 senators attacking Caesar, stabbing him a total of 23 times.



The assassination of Caesar led to years of war



William's body was unceremoniously dumped

A MERE HUNTING ACCIDENT

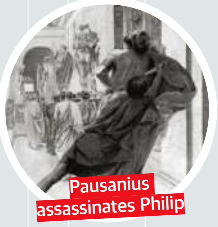
ENGLAND 1100

Third son of William I of England, the Conqueror who took the throne of England by force in 1066, William II was King of England from 1087 CE until his death in 1100. William was out on a hunting trip in the New Forest when he was accidentally 'shot by an arrow by one of his own men'. Initially this incident was reported as a tragic accident. However, the fact that the body of William was left discarded where it had fallen in the forest, and that his men were trained archers, indicates that he was actually assassinated.

Assassination timeline

400 BCE | 300 BCE | 200 BCE | 100BCE | 0 | 500CE | 1000 | 1050 | 1100 | 1150 | 1200 | 1250 | 1300 | 1350 | 1400 | 1450 | 1500 | 1550 | 1600 | 1650 | 1700

Philip II of Macedon falls
Alexander the Great's father is stabbed by one of his bodyguards, Pausanias of Orestis, in Aegae, Macedon. **336 BCE**



Pausanius assassinates Philip

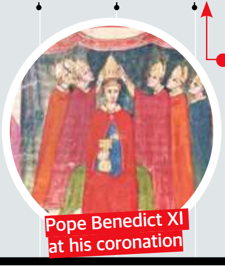
Darius III is betrayed
Persian ruler Darius III is assassinated by his governors after losing a series of battles against the King of Macedon, Alexander the Great. **330 BCE**

Tiberius Gracchus is clubbed to death
This famous reforming Roman politician was beaten to death by a group of rival senators with clubs and chairs on election day. **133 BCE**

Caligula is stabbed to death
The Roman Emperor Caligula was assassinated, as Julius Caesar was before him, by being stabbed multiple times by a group of assassins led by Cassius Chaerea. **41 CE**

Emperor Commodus is strangled to death
Mad Roman Emperor Commodus is assassinated by being strangled to death by his wrestling partner Narcissus. **192 CE**

King William II is shot
The son of William the Conqueror was 'accidentally' shot with an arrow by one of his men while out hunting. **1100 CE**

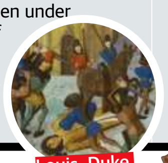


Pope Benedict XI at his coronation

Pope Benedict XI is poisoned
After only eight months as head of the Catholic Church, Benedict suddenly dies from an assassin's poison. **1304 Ce**

Blanche of Bourbon is cut down
A one-time queen consort of Castile, Blanche was later assassinated under the orders of her ex-partner King Peter of Castile. **1361 CE**

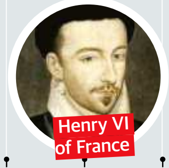
Louis I's life is extinguished
Louis, Duke of Orleans, is assassinated by a group of armed men under the Duke of Burgundy, John the Fearless. **1407 CE**



Louis, Duke of Orleans

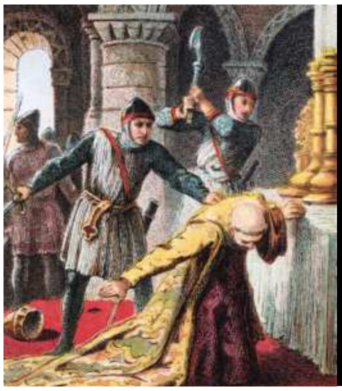
John the Fearless has his head split in two
John the Fearless is assassinated by an axe blow to the head in a revenge assassination by the King of France, Charles VII, for the murder of Duke of Orleans. **1419 CE**

Henry III falls foul to fanatical friar
King of Poland, Henry, is killed by a friar named Jacques Clement. **1589 CE**



Henry VI of France

Henry VI lives no more
King Henry VI is assassinated by catholic fanatic François Ravaillac by being stabbed on the Rue de la Ferronnerie, Paris. **1610 CE**



A TROUBLESOME PRIEST DESPATCHED

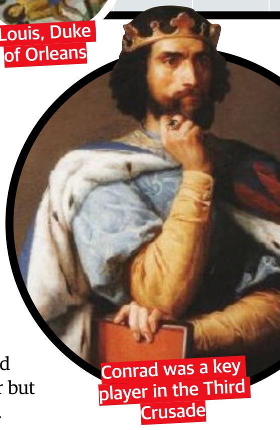
ENGLAND 1170

When Henry II's son, Henry the Young King, was crowned without abiding to Thomas Becket's, the Archbishop of Canterbury, privilege of coronation, Becket excommunicated the other archbishops who had held the ceremony. On hearing of what Becket had done, Henry is reported to have said 'Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?" Upon hearing this, knights Reginald FitzUrse, Hugh de Morville, William de Tracy and Richard le Breton rode immediately for Canterbury, stormed the Cathedral and 'got rid' of Becket.

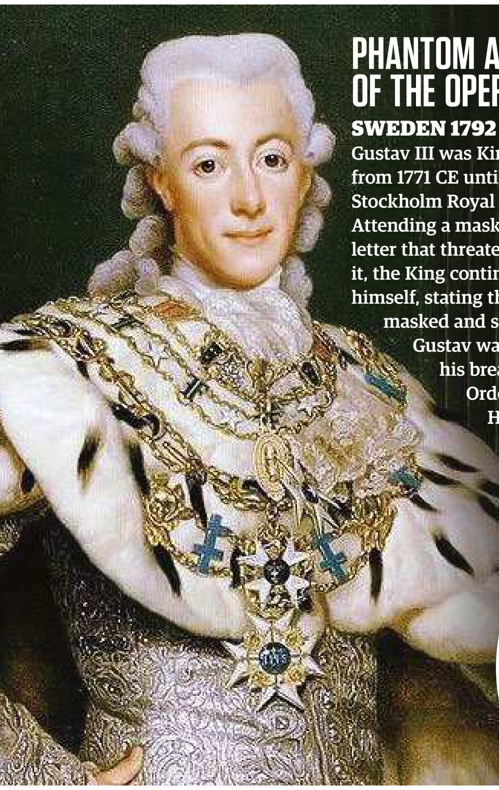
CONRAD OF MONTFERRAT

ISRAEL 1192

A famous Italian nobleman and key player in the Third Crusade, Conrad of Montferrat was de facto and then outright King of Jerusalem from 1190 CE until his murder by the legendary Hashshashin. His demise came as he was travelling to dine with a friend in Acre, a city positioned in modern-day northern Israel. As he walked to the rendezvous two of the elite Muslim assassins, the Hashshashin, stabbed him multiple times in the back. His guards killed one of the assassins and captured the other but Conrad lay dead in a pool of his own blood.



Conrad was a key player in the Third Crusade



PHANTOM ASSASSIN OF THE OPERA

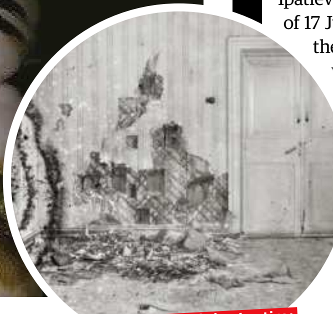
SWEDEN 1792

Gustav III was King of Sweden from 1771 CE until his death in the Stockholm Royal Opera House. Attending a masked ball, he received a letter that threatened his life. Ignoring it, the King continued to enjoy himself, stating that he would be masked and so safe. Unfortunately, Gustav was easily spotted by his breast star of the Royal Order of the Seraphim. He was shot and later died of his wound.

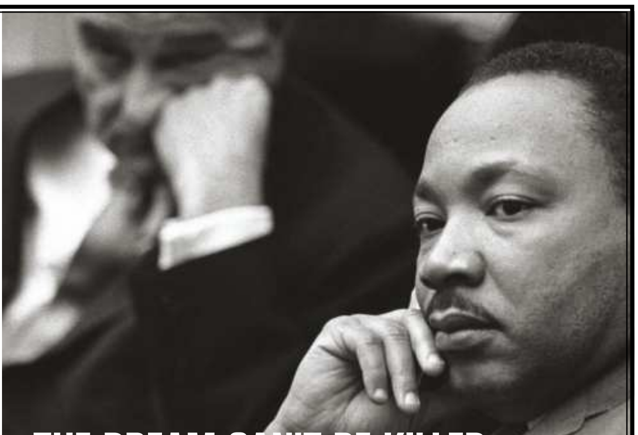
IMPERIAL RUSSIA DIES

RUSSIA 1918

After the October Revolution, where the Bolshevik movement had seized power from the Kerensky government of Russia, the Romanov royal family was evacuated to Tobolsk and placed in a former governor's mansion in 1917. However, with Russia firmly under Bolshevik control, they were transferred to the town of Yekaterinburg and imprisoned in the two-story Ipatiev House. On the night of 17 July of the same year, the entire royal family was woken, told to dress and then escorted to the house's basement. There they were fired upon by a group of Bolshevik executioners, who peppered them with bullets.



The basement of the Ipatiev house where the Romanov family was murdered



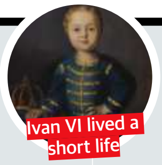
THE DREAM CAN'T BE KILLED

AMERICA 1968

After delivering his famous 'I've been to the mountaintop' speech, civil rights activist Martin Luther King attempted to travel to Memphis, Tennessee. His flight was delayed, however, by a bomb threat to his life. Finally travelling, King checked into room 306 of the Lorraine Motel and began preparing for another speech in support of equal pay. However, as King leaned against the balcony of the room, a bullet entered his right cheek, smashed his jaw and shattered his spinal cord before lodging in his shoulder. King had being shot by James Earl Ray and was pronounced dead an hour later.

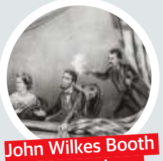
1750 1800 1850 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010

Ivan VI Antonovich is removed from office
After being deposed as an infant and spending years in solitary confinement, Ivan is stabbed multiple times by soldiers of Catherine II.
1764 CE



Ivan VI lived a short life

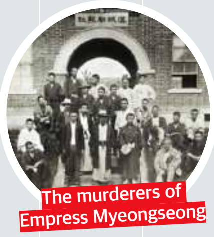
Abraham Lincoln is killed by famous actor
While watching the play, *Our American Cousin*, the US President is assassinated by Confederacy supporter John Wilkes Booth.
1865 CE



John Wilkes Booth pulls the trigger

Alexander II is blown sky high
Despite riding in a bullet-proof carriage this Russian monarch was blown up by a series of bombs in Saint Petersburg.
1881 CE

The Japanese strike at Empress Myeongseong
Japanese assassins fight their way through the Empress' bodyguards before stabbing and burning her corpse.
1895 CE



The murderers of Empress Myeongseong

William McKinley taken out by anarchist
Another US President to bite the dust, McKinley was shot by anarchist Leon Czolgosz at Buffalo, New York. **1901 CE**

President McKinley's shooting

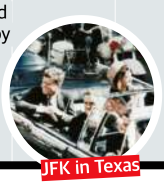
The Black Hand strikes
19-year-old Gavrilo Princip shoots and assassinates the Austro-Hungarian Archduke in Sarajevo. **1914 CE**

Leon Trotsky is made ice-cold
After leading the Left opposition against Joseph Stalin in the Twenties, Trotsky is assassinated by Stalinist agent Ramon Mercader by an ice axe to the head. **1940 CE**

Mahatma Gandhi is struck down
After helping India gain its independence from Britain, Gandhi was shot by Hindu fanatic Nathuram Godse as he walked to prayer.
1948 CE

Gandhi gained worldwide recognition for his peaceful protests

John F. Kennedy hit by sniper
US President JFK is shot and assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald in Dallas, Texas.
1963 CE



JFK in Texas

Yigal kills Yitzhak
The Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated by right-wing radical Yigal Amir. **1995 CE**

Theo van Gogh is cut down
The famous film-maker Gogh is shot multiple times and then stabbed by assassin Mohammed Bouyeri. **2004 CE**

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE MYSTIC MONK

RUSSIA 1916

Grigory Rasputin had already survived an assassination attempt in 1914 when two years later he was poisoned with cyanide before being shot with a revolver. He still didn't die though and, as the assassins made their escape, he quickly rose and lunged at the leader before the other assassins unloaded their revolvers into him. His body was bound, wrapped in a sheet and thrown into the Neva River.

ARMY ANNIHILATE ANWAR EL-SADAT

EGYPT 1981

Following his completion of the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty, Anwar was killed by fundamentalist officers of the Egyptian Army and rioting spread in Egypt.

Former President of Egypt, Anwar el-Sadt

THE MURDER OF BENAZIR BHUTTO

PAKISTAN 2007

Ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto was shot and then blown up at a political rally. She was the first-ever woman PM in an Islamic state and had been campaigning for a third term having twice served twice before in the position, in 1988-1990 and 1993-1996.

BEWARE THE IDES OF MARCH

In a desperate bid to save their beloved country, 60 men decided to murder its leader

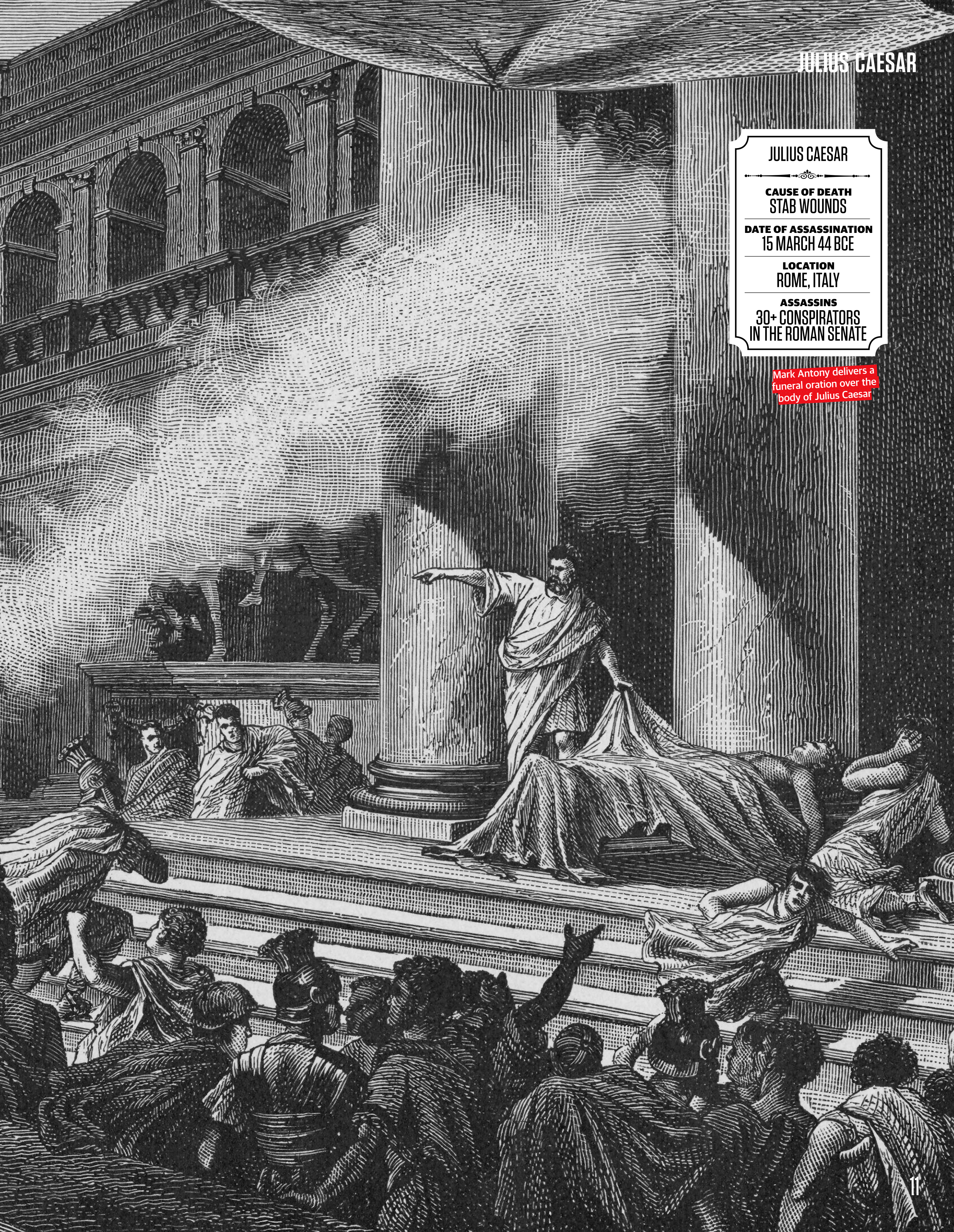
Written by Katharine Marsh

What do you do when you're worried about the state of your homeland? When you think it's being run into the ground by one man with too much power? Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus was in that precarious situation and, in the summer of 45 BCE, he decided what had to be done. After getting his brother-in-law Marcus Brutus to join, things began to gather pace. Their plan? To kill Julius Caesar.

There were several reasons for people to dislike Caesar. One of the prevailing factors was that the senators – particularly those in the conservative optimates faction – were becoming increasingly concerned about Caesar turning his family into a ruling dynasty. There were rumours swirling around the city that he was going to govern with Cleopatra as his queen and Caesarion as their heir, as well as whispers that Caesar would hand everything over to his adopted son Octavian. For many that was just too close to those long-gone days of the hated, tyrannous kings. Even those who didn't see him becoming a king had noticed his growing arrogance. He always wore his thinning hair combed forward with a laurel wreath to hide his baldness. His supposed heightened sense of self-worth was also evident during the annual festival of Lupercalia in February 44 BCE when Mark Antony attempted to place a laurel wreath on Caesar's head. While Caesar refused, many were convinced that he had staged the entire event. Cicero even went so far as to call it the beginning of the end for Rome.

There was also the matter of Caesar's behaviour when he had been at war with Pompey in Spain. In a bloody, violent conflict, many in Rome had lost fathers, brothers and sons when they went off to fight, while those who hadn't considered the soldiers part of their own family. He rode into Rome wearing triumphant garments and a laurel crown, something that many people found to be completely unnecessary, more than a little extravagant, and an insult to the lives of their lost loved ones. His arrogance was also manifest in his actions in the Senate. He sat on what could only be described as a golden throne, adorned in the purple regalia of the ancient Roman kings. He also often refused to rise when approached by senators, which showed his lack of respect for those beneath him. There was even a statue of him that was carried along with the statues of the gods in processions and parades – something that Caesar didn't outright encourage, but then he didn't stop the practice, either.

The optimates, who had never liked Caesar, despised his reforms. With grain being given to the urban poor, shorter terms for provincial governors and a new calendar, the conservative Republic they knew and loved was being threatened. More importantly, their voices and power were gradually being diminished. There would be no shortage of men willing to join the plot to kill Caesar. Although some didn't necessarily join out of hatred for what Caesar had done – it was what he could do in the future that was the problem. The conspirators met secretly



JULIUS CAESAR

CAUSE OF DEATH
STAB WOUNDS

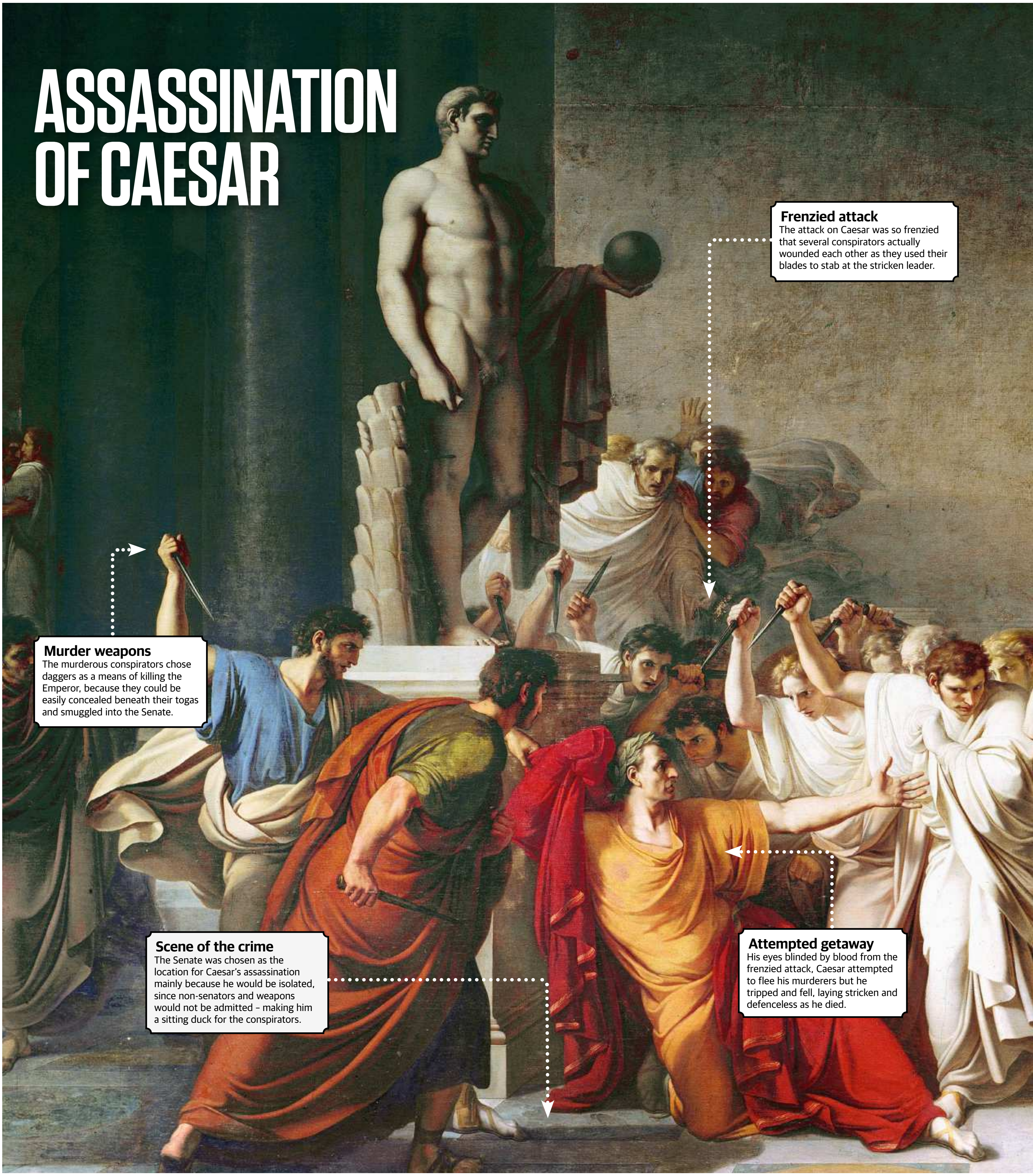
DATE OF ASSASSINATION
15 MARCH 44 BCE

LOCATION
ROME, ITALY

ASSASSINS
30+ CONSPIRATORS IN THE ROMAN SENATE

Mark Antony delivers a funeral oration over the body of Julius Caesar

ASSASSINATION OF CAESAR

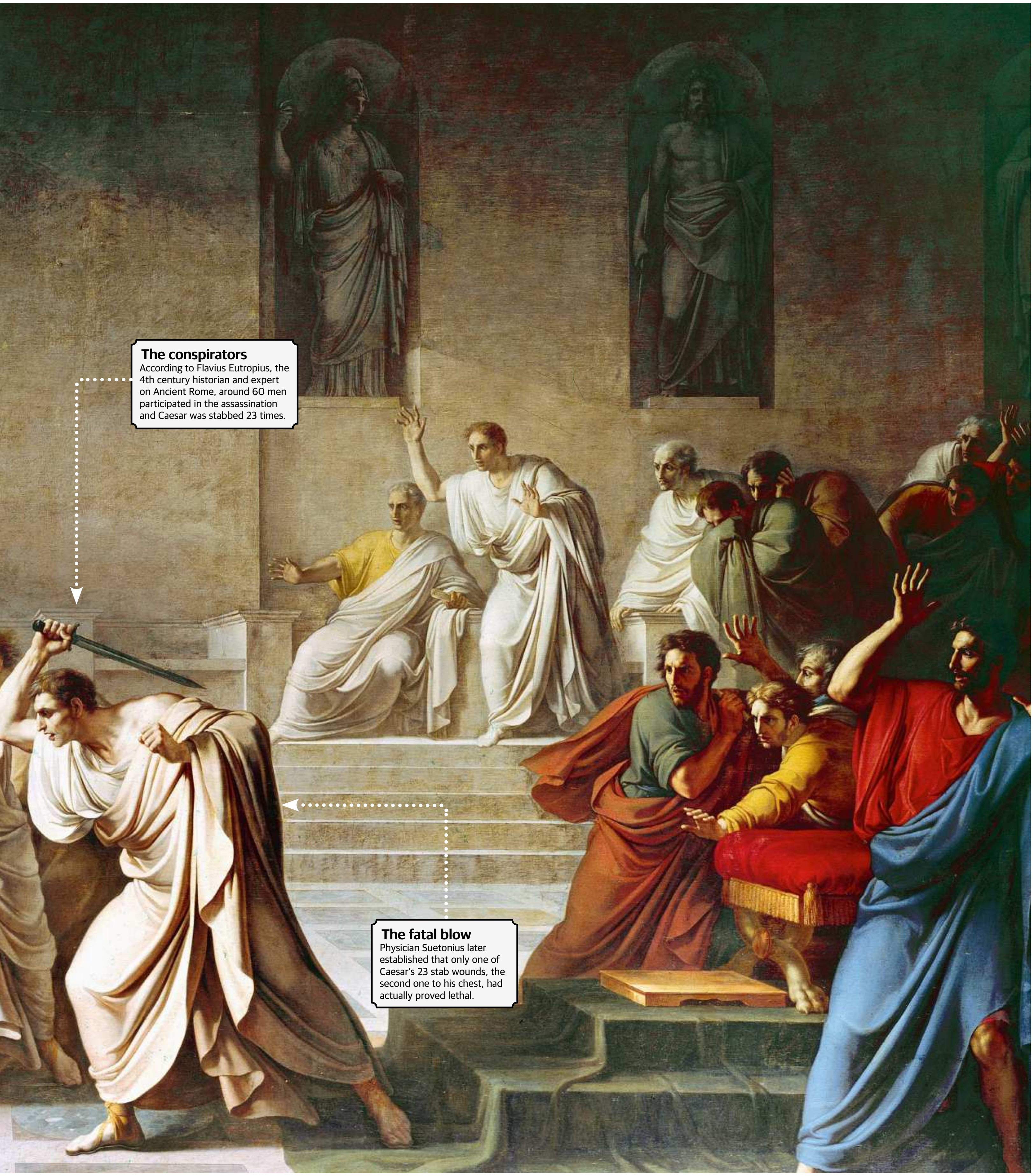


Frenzied attack
The attack on Caesar was so frenzied that several conspirators actually wounded each other as they used their blades to stab at the stricken leader.

Murder weapons
The murderous conspirators chose daggers as a means of killing the Emperor, because they could be easily concealed beneath their togas and smuggled into the Senate.

Scene of the crime
The Senate was chosen as the location for Caesar's assassination mainly because he would be isolated, since non-senators and weapons would not be admitted – making him a sitting duck for the conspirators.

Attempted getaway
His eyes blinded by blood from the frenzied attack, Caesar attempted to flee his murderers but he tripped and fell, laying stricken and defenceless as he died.



The conspirators
According to Flavius Eutropius, the 4th century historian and expert on Ancient Rome, around 60 men participated in the assassination and Caesar was stabbed 23 times.

The fatal blow
Physician Suetonius later established that only one of Caesar's 23 stab wounds, the second one to his chest, had actually proved lethal.

around the city of Rome and in small groups to avoid detection – if they were found out, it could be the end for them as well as their beloved Republic. All told, there were about 60 plotters, 20 of which we know at least the names of today. However, some were more prominent than others and they all had their own reasons for wanting to see Caesar dead. Some of the most well-known plotters, apart from the aforementioned Decimus, were Gaius Trebonius, who had fought on Caesar's side in Spain, Gaius Cassius Longinus, who had served under Crassus and Pompey as a naval commander, and Marcus Junius Brutus, the greedy, arrogant general who had served under Pompey and the son of one of Caesar's favourite mistresses, Servilia. In fact, Brutus turned to Caesar's side in 48 BCE, betraying Pompey by providing intelligence to the enemy. But it was Brutus' marriage to Porcia in 45 BCE that made him turn once more. Porcia's father was Cato, Caesar's late archenemy, and her family was powerful. What could Brutus do?

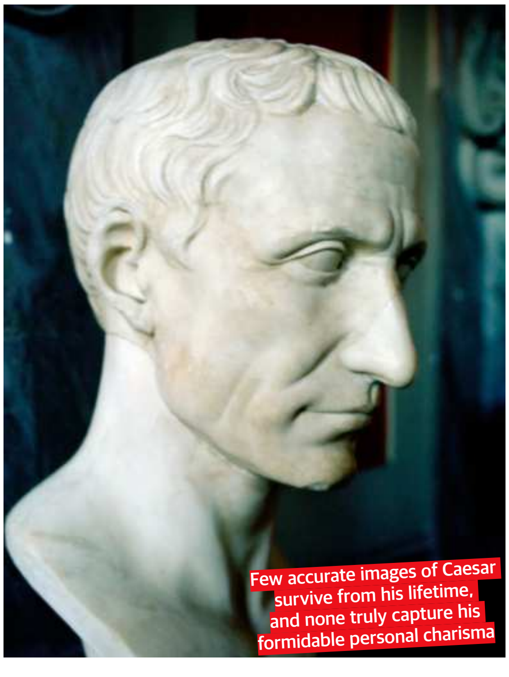
Once the group had decided that killing Caesar was the best course of action, they needed to sort out when, where and how. But planning wouldn't be an issue – most of the conspirators were military men who were used to precision and a certain amount of secrecy. It was decided early on that they would have to do the deed themselves, the main reason being that it showed they were more serious about their fatherland. Hiring killers would be too impersonal. The location caused a considerable amount of debate among the rebels. Should they attack in public or in private? Springing on Caesar while he watched a gladiator match, walked home along the Via Sacra or rode on the Appian Way were all bandied around until they finally decided on the Theatre of Pompey, the temporary location of the Senate while the actual Senate House in Rome was being prepared. As time passed, they began to become worried about when they should strike. Finally, they decided on a date: 15 March 44 BCE, the Ides of March. Caesar would have to attend the Senate and it was four days before his announced departure date to do what he did best – wage war. This time, the conflict was to be another Dacian campaign and the last thing the conspirators wanted was to be bossed around by their leader's underlings in his absence as he got more power and glory abroad. As the date approached, more intelligence was gathered and Decimus was essential in this regard – Caesar never realised that he had turned against him. The traitor was able to report on what Caesar was thinking and what he was going to do next. He also took the time to gain control of a group of gladiators, who would play a key role at a crucial moment later on.

The plot was so clandestine that Caesar had no idea what was going on. In fact, Caesar even dined with one of the soon-to-be assassins on the night of 14 March. When asked his opinion on the sweetest kind of death, the leader dropped his guard, thinking he was in the company of friends. Without missing a beat, he responded, "The kind that comes without warning."

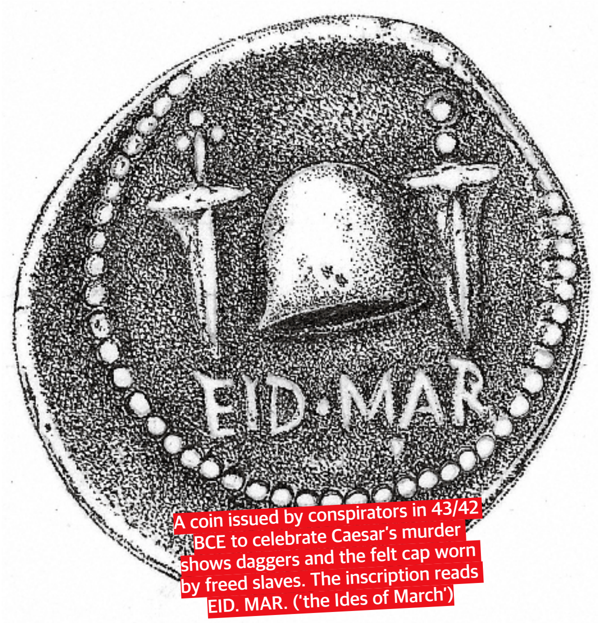
In a way, Caesar had had some warning. A soothsayer had already told him to beware the Ides of March. He'd predicted that the Roman citizens' loved and exalted ruler would be dead before the end of 15 March but Caesar seemed to be ignoring omens that were pointing to his death – and there was more than just the soothsayer.

On the way home, Caesar's horses that were grazing on the banks of the Rubicon were seen to be weeping and that night, his wife, Calpurnia, woke in tears after a terrifying nightmare. She dreamed that her husband had been cradled in her arms, bleeding to death. In the morning, she begged Caesar not to go to the Senate but she had little to worry about – Caesar had come down with an illness. Weak and bedridden, there was no way

A pugio (the standard-issue military dagger used to kill Caesar)



Few accurate images of Caesar survive from his lifetime, and none truly capture his formidable personal charisma



A coin issued by conspirators in 43/42 BCE to celebrate Caesar's murder shows daggers and the felt cap worn by freed slaves. The inscription reads EID. MAR. ('the Ides of March') he was going to make it to the Theatre of Pompey for the Senate meeting.

What a distraught Calpurnia hadn't counted on was Decimus coming to the house to fetch Caesar personally. Undeterred by the dictator's illness, Decimus convinced Caesar to at least make an appearance, even if it was just to postpone the meeting. Caesar reluctantly agreed. On the way there, he came across the same soothsayer who had predicted his ill fortune. "The day which you warned me against is here and I am still alive," Caesar gloated. The soothsayer's simple response was, "Yes, it is here - but it is not yet past." Arriving at the Theatre of Pompey, a bird carrying a sprig of laurel in its beak reportedly flew into the building - but it was eaten by a bigger bird. Caesar took no notice. Instead, he saw Mark Antony deep in conversation with Trebonius. Little did Caesar know that Trebonius' role in the plot was to keep the man most likely to come to his aid busy. Decimus also made sure his gladiators were ready in case they were needed - they were to be a backup security force in case things went south. As Caesar crossed the threshold, a man named Artemidorus tried to warn him of the imminent danger by thrusting a scroll into his hand. Caesar ignored it, not knowing that that simple act would end his life. He made his way to his golden chair and sat. Some men stood behind the chair but he paid them no mind.

Tillius Cimber, a soldier who used to serve under Caesar, went up to the dictator and tried to hand him a petition. True to form, Caesar didn't rise when Cimber approached - but it didn't matter any more. He rejected the petition and Cimber used the opportunity to reach out and pull at his purple toga. That was the signal. Senators leapt at Caesar, revealing their standard-issue military daggers that they had kept hidden under their togas. Speed was of the essence - there were only 60 men in the conspiracy, a small number compared to the other 140 senators and ten tribunes present with their slaves and secretaries. As Publius Servilius Casca struck the first blow, Caesar called out to Cimber, "Why, this is violence!" He tried to fight back by stabbing Casca with a stylus, and two of his supporters - Lucius Marcius Censorinus and Gaius Calvisius Sabinus - tried to rush to his aid but conspirators blocked their way. Caesar was stabbed 23 times in total by people he had considered friends and colleagues. Marcus Brutus stabbed his groin, causing Caesar to whimper, "You too, my child?" As he experienced the excruciating pain - most of the blows seemed to hit his rib cage - he covered his head with his toga so that no one would see his face as he died. He staggered a little around the room before finally falling dead at the feet of a statue of Pompey. The first part of the conspirators' plan was done - but the rest wouldn't be so easy. It turned out that the planning had only gone as far as killing Caesar - no one knew what to do next.

Marcus Junius Brutus was the son of Caesar's long-time lover, Servilia, and highly regarded by the dictator

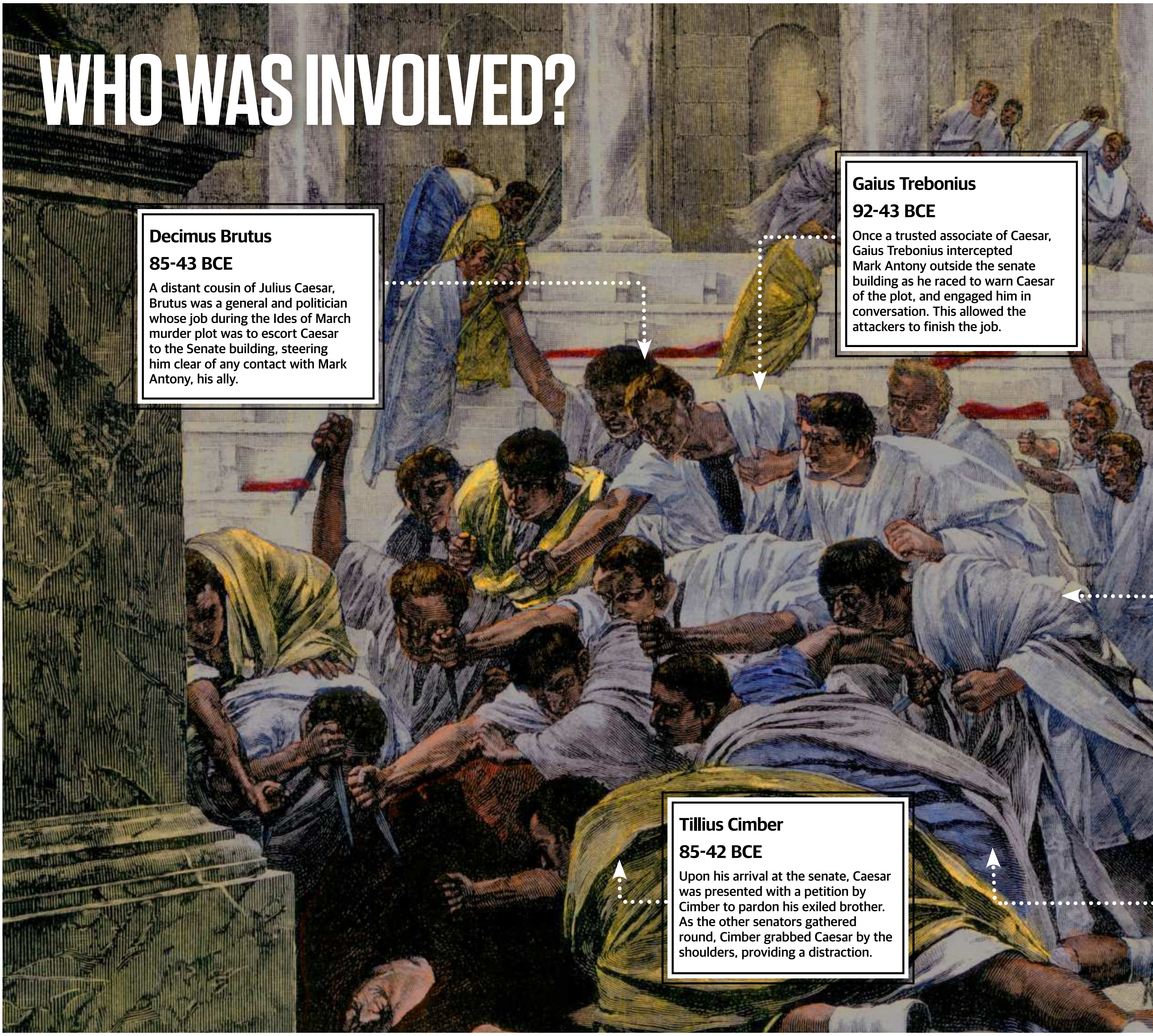
Those who despised Caesar wanted to seize his corpse and throw it into the Tiber so that they were done with him forever, but Mark Antony stopped them. As Caesar's body lay lifeless at the foot of Pompey's statue, Brutus rushed out of the theatre and headed to the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill. From a platform, he gleefully announced the death of Caesar - but the reaction was not what he had anticipated from his fellow Romans. Instead of the citizens rejoicing that this threat to the Republic was gone, there were screams that quickly turned to rioting. Brutus tried his best to calm the crowd but to no avail. As slaves carried the late dictator's body through the streets to his home on a litter, one of his arms hanging down, according to the Roman historian Suetonius, the people wept and wails of grief could be heard from Rome's Jews as they mourned the man who had served as their patron.

On 20 March, Caesar's funeral procession made its way through the city, headed for a pyre that had been built on the Field of Mars near his family's tomb. However, bereaved citizens managed to get the body and took it to the Roman Forum where it was burned on a much simpler pyre. The ashes were later left in the family tomb.

The conspirators had hoped that the death would save the Republic - that life would return to the way it had always been. What they hadn't counted on was the citizens' love for Caesar and how ready the city was for change. The Republic was crumbling and all they'd done was hasten it. While Mark Antony now had a considerable amount of power - as he showed when he sought a compromise with the Senate on 17 March to keep Caesar's laws intact in exchange for amnesty for the conspirators - a civil war between him and Caesar's adopted son Octavian was becoming more and more likely. The peace that the plotters had so desperately wished for wasn't going to happen until the Republic fell. Most of the conspirators fled.

Perhaps killing Caesar hadn't been the best course of action for the plotters. Maybe if they'd planned what to do in the immediate aftermath, they could have controlled the situation better. But the rebels had acted in the name of the Republic, trying desperately to protect all that they held dear. How could they have known it would lead directly to its downfall?

WHO WAS INVOLVED?



Decimus Brutus

85-43 BCE

A distant cousin of Julius Caesar, Brutus was a general and politician whose job during the Ides of March murder plot was to escort Caesar to the Senate building, steering him clear of any contact with Mark Antony, his ally.

Gaius Trebonius

92-43 BCE

Once a trusted associate of Caesar, Gaius Trebonius intercepted Mark Antony outside the senate building as he raced to warn Caesar of the plot, and engaged him in conversation. This allowed the attackers to finish the job.

Tillius Cimber

85-42 BCE

Upon his arrival at the senate, Caesar was presented with a petition by Cimber to pardon his exiled brother. As the other senators gathered round, Cimber grabbed Caesar by the shoulders, providing a distraction.

Timeline

OCTOBER 45 BCE

Caesar dismisses his security
Believing that nobody would dare attack him, Caesar dismissed his Spanish bodyguard, an act that would allow the conspirators to carry out their ghastly plot effectively.
45 BCE

FEBRUARY 44 BCE

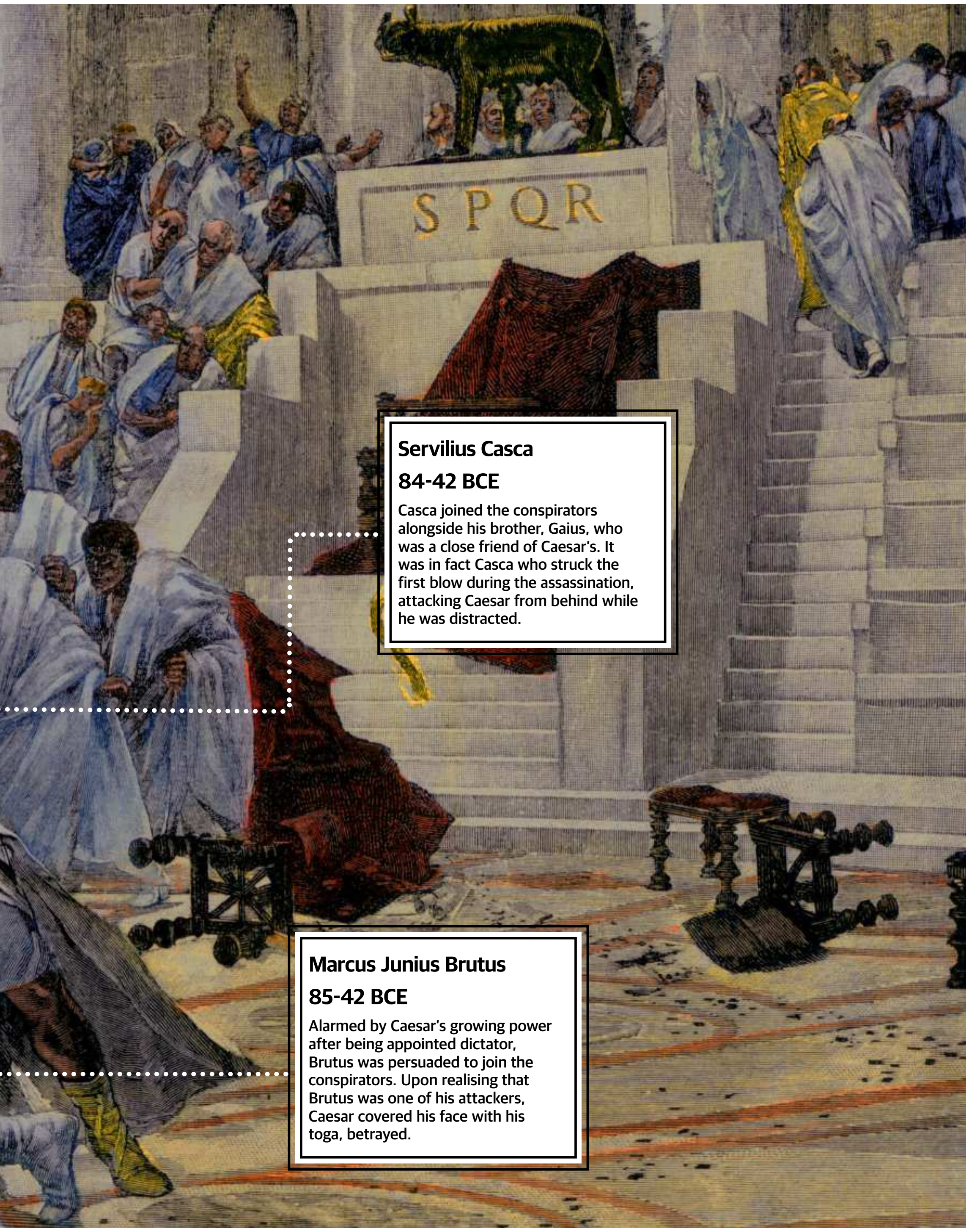
Dictator for life
Caesar is named dictator for life, an honour which saw him elevated to almost divine status. His inflated arrogance began to infuriate those around him, especially his close allies in the Senate.
44 BCE

FEBRUARY 44 BCE

The festival of Lupercalia
When Mark Antony attempted to place a laurel wreath on Caesar's head while in the Forum, Caesar pushed it away stating that Jupiter was the king of Romans, an act that many saw as staged.
44 BCE

MARCH 44 BCE

The plot is hatched
As they formulated their plot to kill Caesar, the conspirators met secretly in small groups to avoid detection. As Caesar was due to embark on a three year campaign they had to act quick.
44 BCE



Servilius Casca

84-42 BCE

Casca joined the conspirators alongside his brother, Gaius, who was a close friend of Caesar's. It was in fact Casca who struck the first blow during the assassination, attacking Caesar from behind while he was distracted.

Marcus Junius Brutus

85-42 BCE

Alarmed by Caesar's growing power after being appointed dictator, Brutus was persuaded to join the conspirators. Upon realising that Brutus was one of his attackers, Caesar covered his face with his toga, betrayed.

15 MARCH 44 BCE

The Ides of March

Despite being begged not to go by his wife, Calpurnia, (who awoke hysterical after nightmares depicting impending danger to Caesar) he attended the Senate and was assassinated.

44 BCE

20 MARCH 44 BCE

The funeral procession

Caesar was due to be cremated on a pyre in the Field of Mars, close to his family tomb, but his body was seized by locals and taken to the Forum where it was burned on a simpler pyre.

44 BCE

CAESAR'S FINAL HOURS

WHEN IT HAPPENED

In 44 BCE Caesar planned a major expedition against Parthia to avenge Crassus, and would be away for several years. Three days before he was due to leave, the assassins struck. It was 15 March – or the Ides, one of the three named days in each Roman month.

THE NOBLEST ROMAN

Brutus was the son of Caesar's long-time mistress, Servilia, and her first husband. He was seen as an up-and-coming man in the Senate, although so far he had achieved little. A follower of the stern stoic philosophy, he was determined to the point of obsession. Caesar said: "Whatever Brutus wants, he wants badly." Brutus insisted that only Caesar be killed, and naively seems to have assumed that a pristine republic would somehow spring back to life once the dictator was dead.

LEAN AND HUNGRY

Cassius was married to Brutus' sister, Tertia. Rumour said that she had had an affair with Caesar. Cassius had won fame by extricating the survivors of Crassus' army after the disaster in Parthia. He was said to be jealous of the favour Caesar showed to Brutus.

LIBERTY

Brutus and Cassius were doing rather well under the dictatorship, but they and their fellow conspirators felt that the very existence of a dictator meant that the Republic could not function. It should also be said that if they succeeded, they could expect to be the leading men in the restored Republic.

THE MEEK MARTYR

Caesar is often depicted accepting his fate meekly. In fact, when first stabbed, he turned and yelled: "Bloody Casca, what are you playing at!" He then drew the long stylus pen he was carrying and jabbed at Casca with its sharp iron point. Caesar was wounded 23 times, although in the confusion, several of the conspirators, including Brutus, were accidentally stabbed by their comrades.

"ET TU, BRUTE?"

While Shakespeare's version follows the biographer Plutarch's account closely, it is unlikely that these were Caesar's final words. Instead, he seems to have spoken in Greek, looking at Brutus and saying "Kai su, teknon?" ("You too, my son?"). It is unclear whether this was said in sad disappointment or in contemptuous defiance.

FRIENDS, ROMANS AND COUNTRYMEN

Mark Antony was Caesar's fellow consul, and persuaded the conspirators to agree to holding a public funeral. While we do not know what he said, Shakespeare's version gives a fine impression of Roman political oratory, and the result was rioting against the conspirators. Fleeing Rome, Brutus, Cassius and the others began to raise armies and act just as Caesar and Pompey had done in the past.

THE ARCHBISHOP MADE A MARTYR

How a tragic misunderstanding and unwavering loyalty led to the brutal assassination of the Archbishop of Canterbury

Written by Katharine Marsh

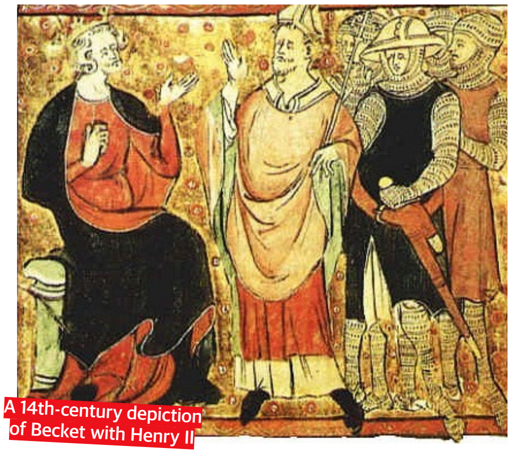
Thomas Becket hadn't known it would be his last day – he didn't think that the argument with four knights would lead to murder. But that evening, as dusk fell on 29 December 1170, the knights followed the archbishop into Canterbury Cathedral and as he knelt at the altar, they struck. It was a violent end for a holy man, but it was the result of a misunderstanding.

Becket came from a lowly background as the son of a merchant, but his star was in the ascendant. One of his closest friends was a prince and in 1154, the prince became King Henry II of England. Becket became chancellor and together they ruled the country, bring law and order to their subjects. It seemed like a match made in heaven.

The only problem was the Church. Priests who committed crimes could claim benefit of the clergy, meaning they would be tried in the ecclesiastical courts and get lighter sentences; the worst punishment they could get would be expulsion from the priesthood. Naturally, the loophole was exploited – men of the cloth literally got away with murder. It didn't help that churchmen weren't answerable to their kings as their loyalty lay in Rome with the Pope.

In May 1161, an answer to the issue fell right into Henry's lap: the archbishop of Canterbury died. Seizing his chance, Becket was placed in the role. It was the perfect solution – the pair wanted to bring the Church to order, and what better way to do that than taking the highest religious position in the country? Becket tried to warn King Henry against the plan for the better part of a year, but his protestations fell on deaf ears. Henry pressed on.

What the king didn't see coming was how the position would affect his friend. The once proud man who had been anxious to please – if a little arrogant – turned into the epitome of piety. He only wore a sackcloth shirt, ate little, only drank water and, worst of all, he turned against the monarchy. Now that he was in charge of the Church, he didn't see why the organisation should be stripped of its power and began kicking up a fuss. Henry's response was swift: a charge of treason. Becket fled to France, only returning six years later when Henry dropped the charge under threat of excommunication by the Pope.

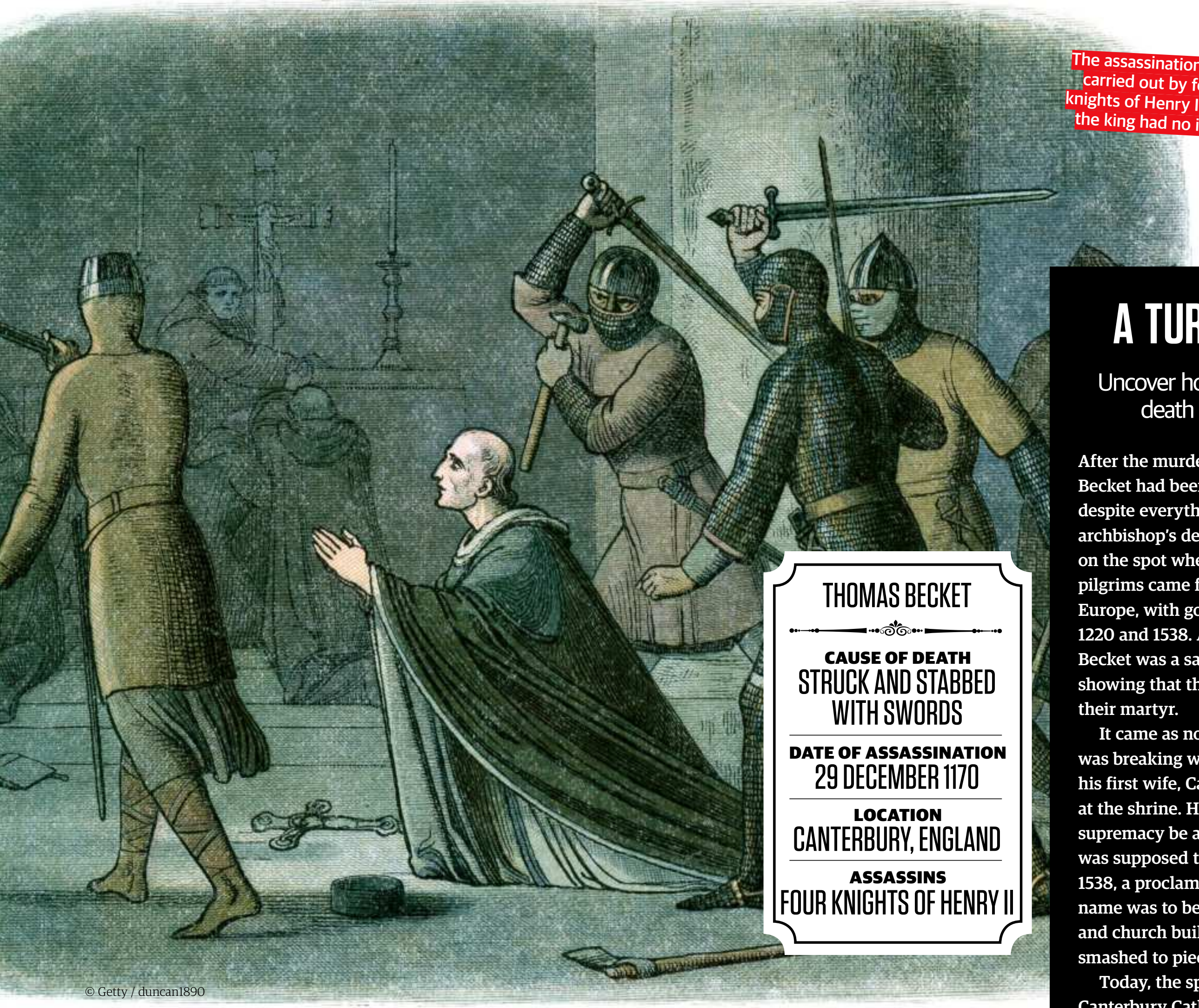


A 14th-century depiction of Becket with Henry II

The friendship was never rekindled. On Christmas Day 1170, Becket's sermon was as inflammatory as ever and he went as far as to excommunicate some bishops, booming: "May they all be damned by Jesus Christ!" The king was livid, and in is outrage apparently exclaimed: "Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?"

It was probably a throwaway comment – an exclamation of irritation – but four of Henry's knights thought differently. They immediately headed for Canterbury, arriving on 29 December. Upon entering the cathedral, they found their target at the High Altar, kneeling in prayer. The first knight approached and with the flat of his sword, hit the archbishop. The others piled in, and with a flurry of swords, they butchered Becket where he knelt.

Henry was appalled and immediately sought penance. For three days he wore his own sackcloth shirt and starved himself. Becket was proclaimed a martyr and three years later he was canonised. The spot of his murder in Canterbury Cathedral was turned into a shrine and making the journey there became one of the most important pilgrimages in England.



The assassination was carried out by four knights of Henry II, but the king had no idea

© Getty / duncan1890

THOMAS BECKET

CAUSE OF DEATH
STRUCK AND STABBED WITH SWORDS

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
29 DECEMBER 1170

LOCATION
CANTERBURY, ENGLAND

ASSASSINS
FOUR KNIGHTS OF HENRY II

A TURBULENT SHRINE

Uncover how the very spot of Becket's death has been memorialised

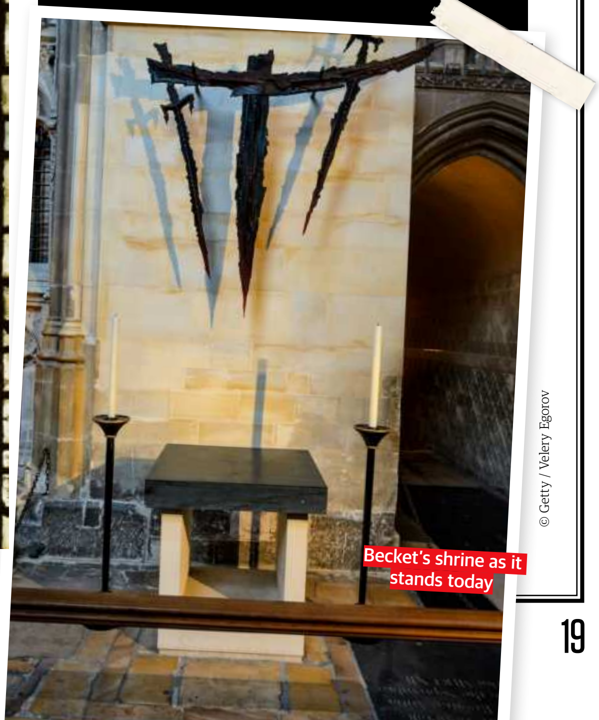
After the murder, the king fell into mourning - Becket had been his childhood friend, after all, despite everything. Just a few years after the archbishop's death, he erected a shrine to him on the spot where he had been assassinated and pilgrims came from all over the country, and even Europe, with gold, silver and jewellery between 1220 and 1538. As far as they were concerned, Becket was a saint for standing up to the king and showing that the Church would prevail. He was their martyr.

It came as no surprise that when Henry VIII was breaking with Rome in an attempt to divorce his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, he took aim at the shrine. How could this symbol of Catholic supremacy be allowed to stand when the king was supposed to be a staunch Protestant? In 1538, a proclamation was issued: Becket's name was to be removed from liturgical books and church buildings, and his tomb was to be smashed to pieces.

Today, the spot of the assassination in Canterbury Cathedral is still marked, despite it being the centre of the Anglican Church of England. A slab of stone on the floor bears his name, although the stones around it are worn from the knees of praying pilgrims, and a small altar has been erected. In 1986 a sculpture was hung above the site of two swords with reddened tips - along with their shadows, it shows the four swords used by the knights. Becket may be gone, but he will never be forgotten.

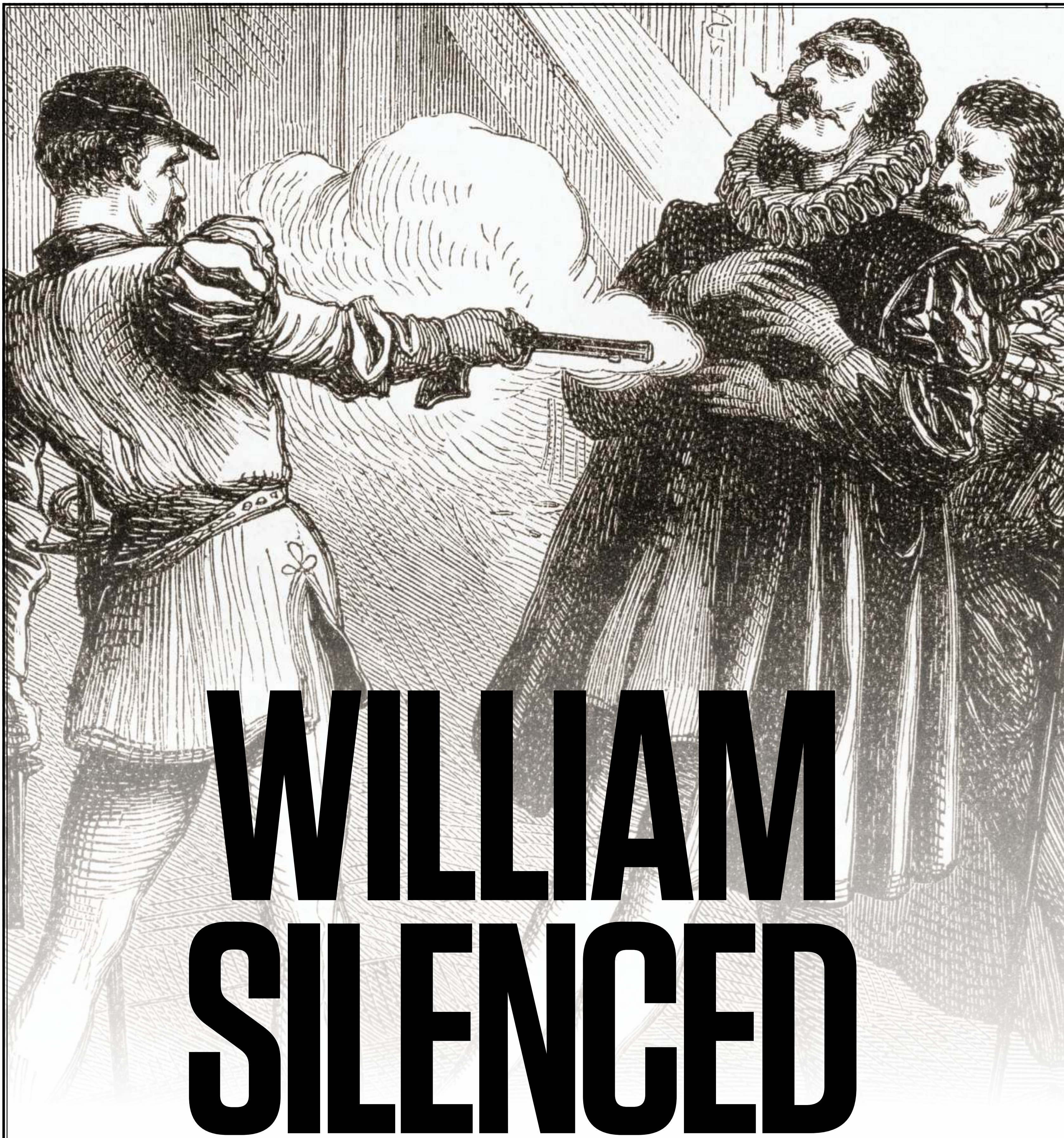
This stained glass panel at Canterbury Cathedral depicts pilgrims at Becket's shrine

© Getty / Angelo Hornak



Becket's shrine as it stands today

© Getty / Velery Egorov



WILLIAM SILENCED

How the Dutch rebel with a cause met his untimely end

Written by Sanne de Boer

The Dutch national hero was born in Germany as the oldest son of the Count of Nassau, and raised as a Lutheran Protestant. At 12 he had to convert to Catholicism to receive an inheritance from his uncle René of Chalons – including land in the Netherlands and the principality of Orange – thus becoming William of Orange-Nassau, and a prince by blood. At the time William inherited these lands, the Netherlands was a collection of provinces governed by Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, but still retained a degree of individual rule with Stadtholders – political leaders who represented provinces and maintained relationships between them. Emperor Charles V summoned the young William to the Netherlands to become a page at the imperial court, which led to a shining military career and the position of Stadtholder of three provinces in 1559: Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht.

However, everything changed when Charles V died, and the rule over the Dutch principalities was passed to the Spanish branch of the Habsburg dynasty. King Philip II of Spain, a devout Catholic, succeeded Charles V in 1556, and was determined to drive out the Protestant faith. Protestants were forced to practise their religion in secret, and frustrations among them rose.

It is during this dark period that William turned from a respected political figure into a rebel. Soon after his second marriage to Anna of Saxony, a noble lady with a Lutheran Protestant background, William became vocal of his support of religious freedom. He delivered a speech to the Council of State in 1564 criticising rulers that forced religion upon their people.

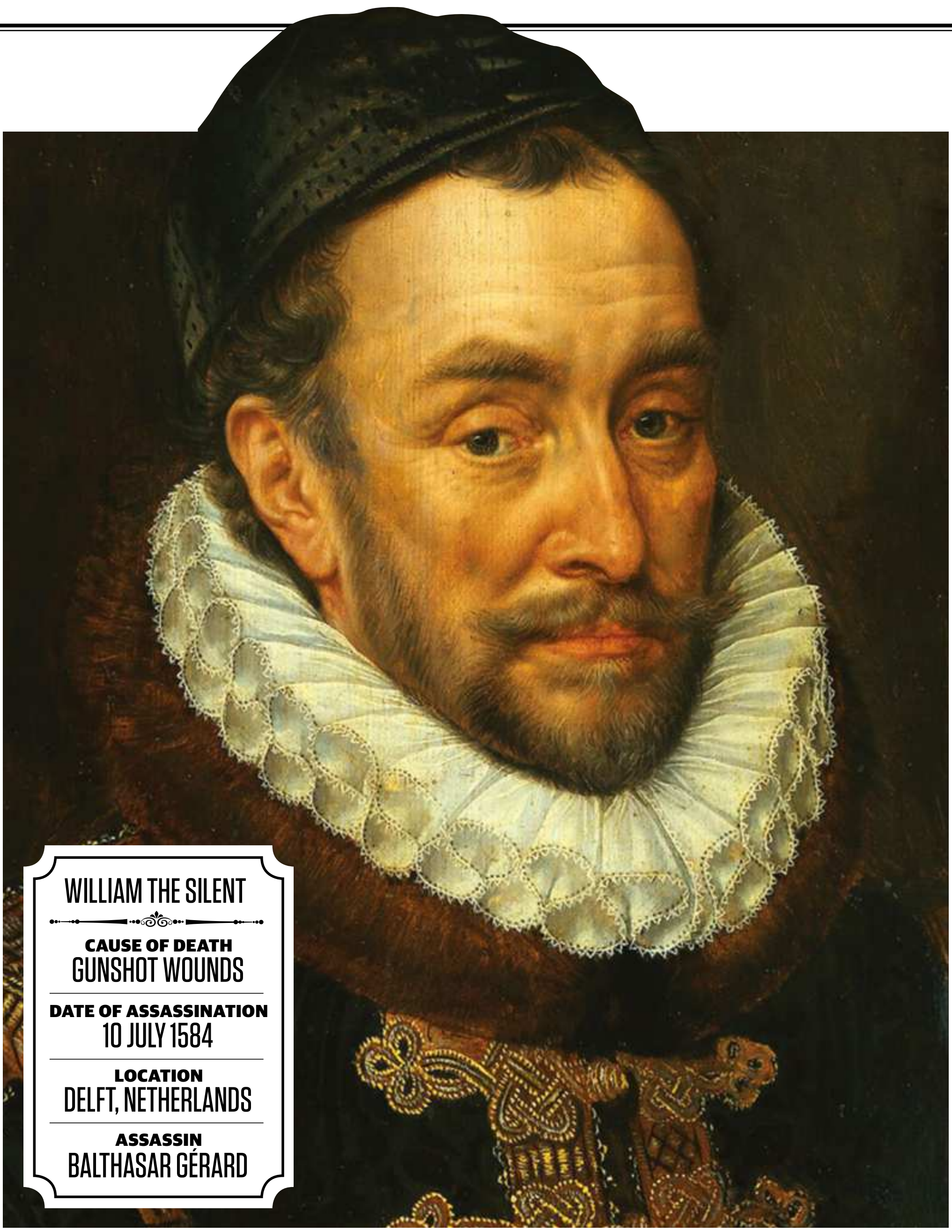
In August 1566, the Beeldenstorm (Storm of Statues) began, where Protestants attacked Catholic churches and destroyed depictions of Christ and other holy icons. William was quick to support the political motivation that fuelled the Beeldenstorm, but tried to subdue the social unrest. This resulted in mistrust from both sides, so he fled to Dillenburg. During his exile, his lands were seized and his oldest son taken to Spain, which marked the start of William's true rebellion: leading an armed opposition to the Habsburg rule in 1568.

It took many years and failed sieges for his campaign to take effect. Finally, victory came when in April 1572, 600 pirates with letters of marque by William of Orange, the 'Sea Beggars', seized the port of Brill. This kick-started support for the Orange camp, and by July, the 'Orange towns' in the state of Holland accepted – also known as William the Silent – as their Stadtholder once more.

When Spain's funds ran out due to their efforts to take the Ottoman Empire, many Spanish troops mutinied. The rebellious provinces of Holland and Zeeland presented themselves as the solution, and signed a treaty with the states-general: the Pacification of Ghent. It seemed like this would mark the reunification of the provinces, but their religious and political differences tore them into two unions by 1578: the Union of Arras, aiming to reconcile with King Philip II, and the Union of Utrecht, which unified the rebellious provinces.

By this time, William had been marked as a traitor by Philip II, and a price was put on his head. On 10 July 1584, he was assassinated by the French Catholic Balthazar Gérard – becoming the first political figure to be assassinated with a firearm. William's popularity proved even greater after his death, as his murder was met with uproar and his killer was seized.

The punishment for murdering the hero of the Netherlands? The hand that pulled the trigger was cut off with a hot iron, after which he was gruesomely quartered.



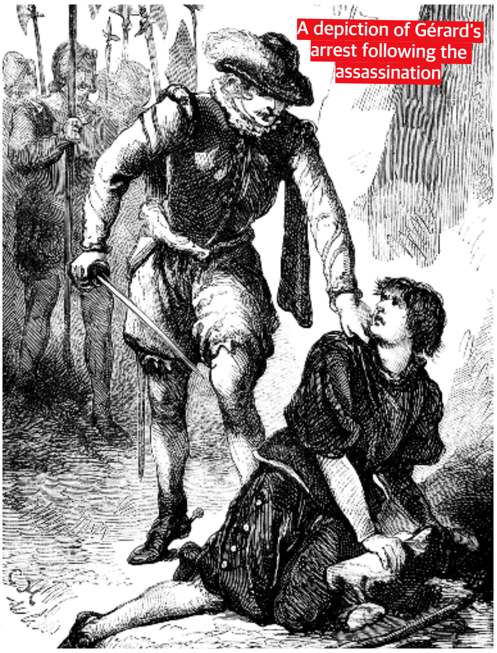
WILLIAM THE SILENT

CAUSE OF DEATH
GUNSHOT WOUNDS

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
10 JULY 1584

LOCATION
DELFT, NETHERLANDS

ASSASSIN
BALTHASAR GÉRARD



A depiction of Gérard's arrest following the assassination

© Alamy

DEATH OF THE GOOD KING

Uncover what we know and what we may never find out about the assassination of Henry IV of France

Written by Jonathan O'Callaghan

Henry IV was the king of France from 2 August 1589 until he was murdered by a fanatical monk nearly 21 years later. Born on 13 December 1553, Henry was the first ruler from the House of Bourbon, which extended across Europe into Spain, Italy and Luxembourg. But his assassination brought to an end a popular reign that had endeared him to the French public while easing many of the country's woes.

Son to Antoine de Bourbon, Henry's reign began following conflict between Catholic and Protestant forces. He became king of Navarre, a province of Spain, in 1572 following the death of his mother. He then became heir to the throne of France upon the death of Henry III's brother in 1584, but this was strongly opposed by the Roman Catholics as he was a Protestant. But when Henry III was stabbed in 1588, Henry IV's time as king of France began.

Henry's early time as king was tumultuous, with Catholic soldiers unhappy about having a Protestant monarch. After fighting numerous battles, Henry decided to convert to Catholicism in July 1593 – reversing his decision to convert the other way years before. While some doubted how sincere he was, the decision brought the Catholics back on side, giving him crucial control of Paris in March 1594.

With his crown assured, Henry gradually brought order to his kingdom, reducing the national debt to nothing and revitalising agriculture to help the economy grow. He signed treaties with numerous countries to bring trade to France while increasing the pay and ranks of the army, and he also did his best to stymie the influence of Spain in Europe.

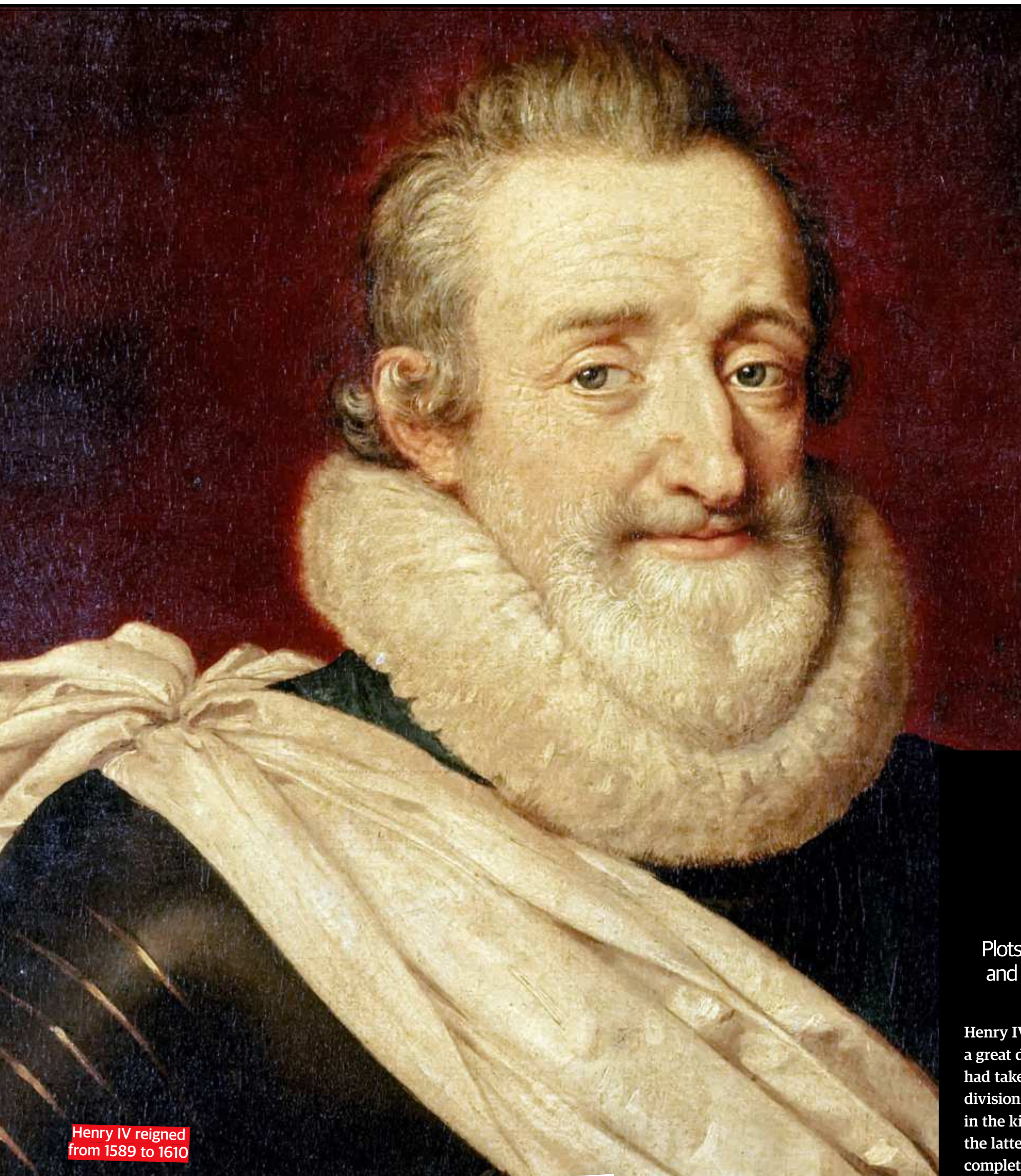
Henry is one of the few kings of France to be revered by the people, mostly for his reshaping of the country and his ability to end the constant fighting between Protestants and Catholics. However, he was not popular with all – a point driven home by more than 20 assassination attempts during his reign. Unfortunately his luck would finally run out on 14 May 1610.

On that day, Henry was travelling in an open carriage through Paris and when two carts blocked the way, his guards left to move them out of the way. Unknown to the king, however, his would-be assassin was lying in wait. François Ravaillac, a fanatical monk, had become infatuated with the belief that the king intended to start a war against the pope, based on some hallucinations that he interpreted as visions. When the king's carriage was stopped, Ravaillac had his chance to strike. He leapt up and stabbed Henry twice in the throat and chest, striking his heart. The monarch was taken to the Louvre, and despite some confusion as to whether he had really survived, he would later die in his bed surrounded by nuns and monks from Parisian monasteries. The king beloved by so many had been killed in a brutal and heartless attack.

Henry's death is all the more sombre when you take into account that his wife, Marie de' Medici, had been crowned queen of France the day before. Just two weeks later, Ravaillac was drawn and quartered. However, some questions remain over whether he was really acting alone, or whether he had been "persuaded" – as he suggested in his final moments – to kill the king. There were some suspicions that he had been given a sum of money prior to the murder and that he was given safe haven following the attack. No accomplices were ever found, though, so it remains a mystery to this day.

What we do know is that the king's death brought a decisive and popular reign to an end. Henry succeeded in bringing peace to France, while the combination of a strong monarchy and government brought a much-needed period of prosperity to the country. Not only did France thrive economically, but its arts and education were revived under Henry, leading to constructions such as the Place Royale (now the Place des Vosges) in Paris, a great square for the public to assemble that inspired many others, including London's Covent Garden.

Henry was succeeded by his son Louis XIII, who would go on to reign until 1643. But in Henry France lost one of its most revered kings, one that is still looked back fondly on today. For a country with such a strained relationship with the monarchy, that was something extremely hard to come by.



Henry IV reigned from 1589 to 1610

© Getty / Heritage Images

HENRY IV

CAUSE OF DEATH
STABBED

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
14 MAY 1610

LOCATION
PARIS, FRANCE

ASSASSIN
FRANÇOIS RAVAILLAC

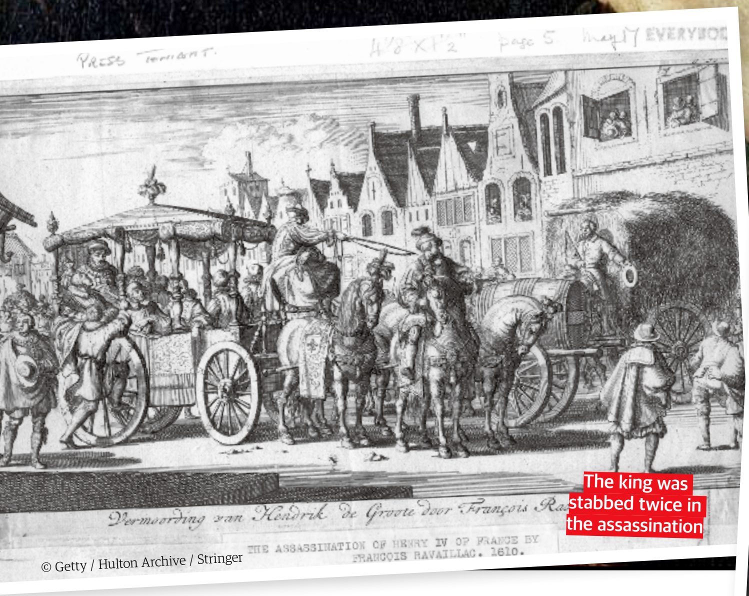
WAS THERE A CONSPIRACY TO KILL HENRY?

Plots were plentiful in Medieval France, and some think that there was one to murder the beloved monarch

Henry IV's reign as king of France, while achieving a great deal, was not without its problems. Henry had taken the throne to the backdrop of great divisions between Protestants and Roman Catholics in the kingdom, and while his conversion to the latter did do a lot to calm matters, it did not completely eradicate tensions.

French noble Jean-Louis de Nogaret de La Valette had been opposed to the accession of Henry IV, and there have been some suspicions that he had a part to play in the murder – perhaps even in cahoots with Henry's wife, Marie de' Medici, who had been crowned just a day earlier. De La Valette, in fact, was sitting in the carriage with Henry when he was killed, and some have questioned why he did not do more to stop it.

It has also been suggested that de La Valette's mistress, Charlotte du Tillet, gave Ravaillac a sum of money a day before the murder. And de La Valette is believed to have given Ravaillac safe haven for 24 hours after the murder. At Ravaillac's execution on 27 May, he proclaimed: "I was deceived when they persuaded me that my deed would be well received by the people." But we might never know who he was referring to.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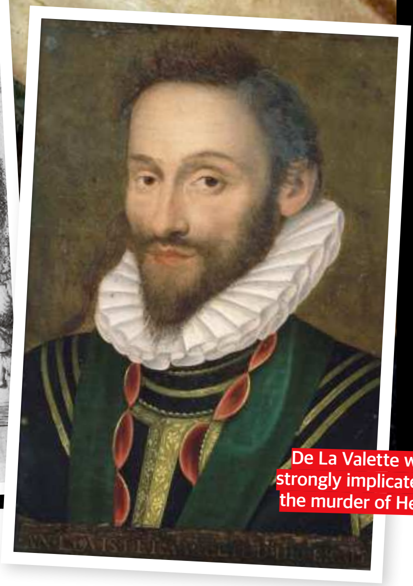
May 17
EVERYBOD
Vermoording van Hendrik de Groote door François Ra
THE ASSASSINATION OF HENRY IV OF FRANCE BY
FRANCOIS RAVAILLAC. 1610.

The king was stabbed twice in the assassination

© Getty / Hulton Archive / Stringer



De La Valette was strongly implicated in the murder of Henry

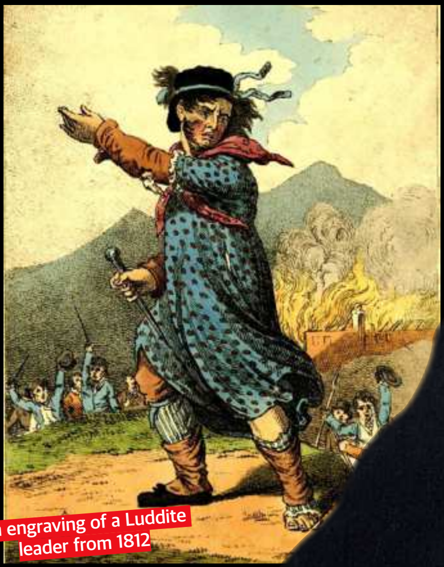
DOMESTIC DISORDER

With tensions rising, it was feared that rebellion wasn't far away

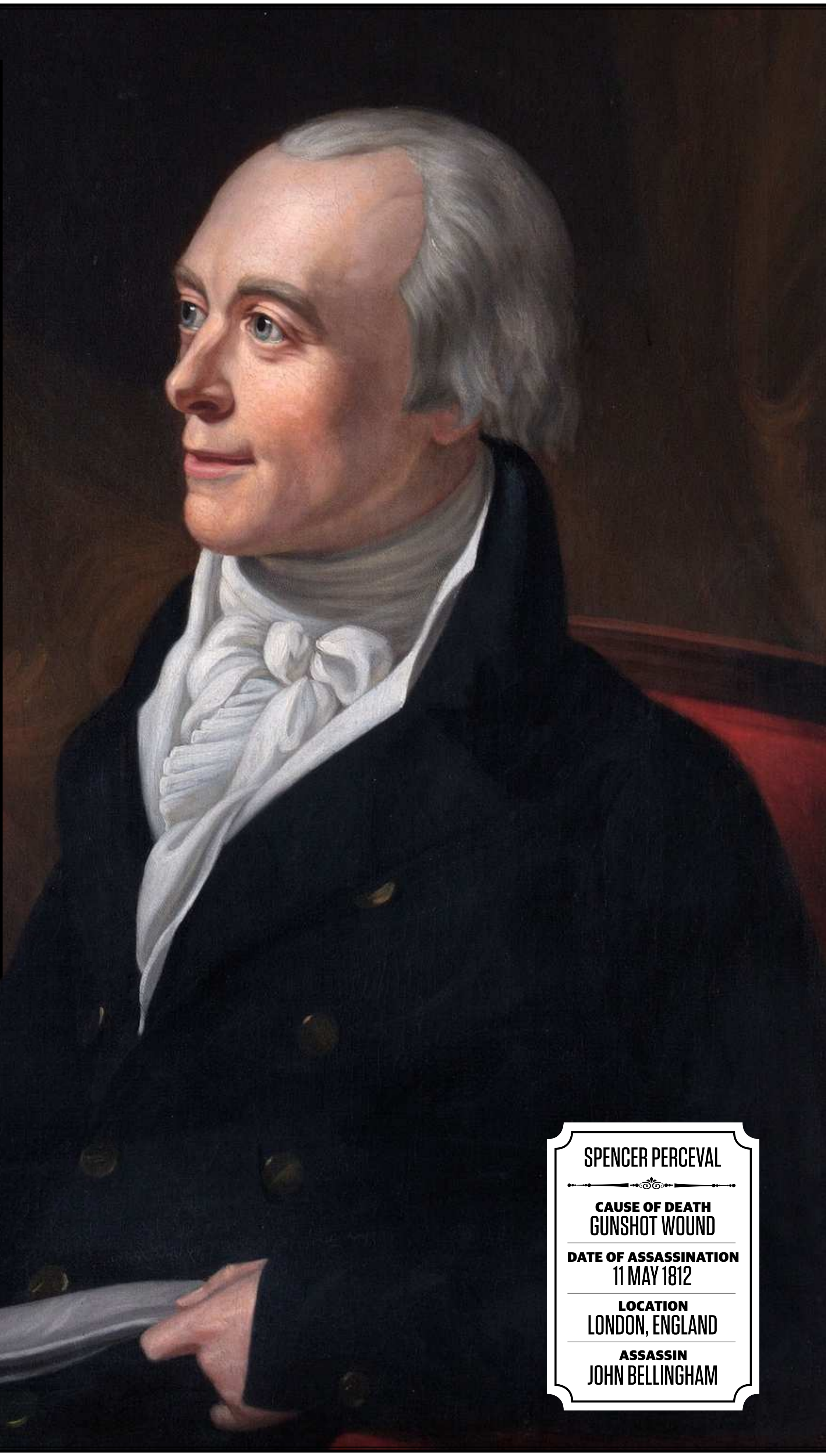
Perceval had been prime minister from 1809 to 1812 and at the time of his assassination, Britain had been going through a period of political unrest. The Luddite movement, a group of textile workers who feared that the introduction of machinery put their livelihoods at risk, had emerged in northern England, breaking into factories and destroying machines. It did not help that Britain was also at war with France, which intensified economic pressure and led to increased poverty in some areas of the country.

This situation worsened thanks to the Orders in Council, a series of restrictions placed on French trade in response to the war, which were extremely unpopular with Englishmen who claimed that they were ruining their trade. On the day of Perceval's assassination, he had arrived at the House of Commons to attend an inquiry into the effect the Orders were having domestically and whether they should be repealed.

Considering the tension in Britain at the time, it is unsurprising that immediately after Perceval's assassination, there was a concern in Parliament that his death was the start of a widespread rebellion and that Bellingham may have had accomplices lurking around - especially as a mob attempted to free him as he was escorted to Newgate Prison.



An engraving of a Luddite leader from 1812



Perceval was British prime minister from 1809 to 1812

SPENCER PERCEVAL

CAUSE OF DEATH
GUNSHOT WOUND

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
11 MAY 1812

LOCATION
LONDON, ENGLAND

ASSASSIN
JOHN BELLINGHAM

MURDER OF THE PRIME MINISTER

How Spencer Perceval lost his life at the hands of a calculated murderer hell-bent on revenge

Written by Jessica Leggett

It was 5.15pm and the British prime minister, Spencer Perceval, was running late. Stepping into the lobby of the House of Commons and removing his coat, Perceval took a few steps forward before a man wearing an overcoat approached him, having risen from his seat next to the fireplace nearby. Taking out a pistol, the man pointed it at Perceval and shot a bullet right into his chest. Staggering forward, Perceval gasped, "I am murdered," before collapsing face down in front of a shocked MP, with men rushing to help him. Meanwhile, the assassin calmly returned to his seat by the fireplace and waited for his arrest.

The assassin, John Bellingham, was a failed businessman in his 40s from Liverpool, who had held a grudge against the government for years. He had been arrested at the Russian port of Arkhangelsk for debt in 1804, spending the next five years in prison. Bellingham insisted that he had been set up by two disgruntled Russian merchants, but his pleas of innocence were ignored. Returning to England in 1809 and struggling financially, Bellingham was furious about the lack of assistance that he had received from the British government, in particular from Granville Leveson-Gower, the ambassador in Saint Petersburg.

For the next three years, he repeatedly petitioned Perceval, the Prince Regent, the treasury and the Privy Council demanding that they address his case and award him compensation, but he was rebuffed. Infuriated and desperate, Bellingham decided that assassinating Perceval was the only way he would be heard. In preparation, he bought two pistols in Skinner Street and got a tailor to make a special nine-inch pocket inside his overcoat to accommodate one of them, before spending the next few weeks visiting the House of Commons and observing the members of Parliament.

After Perceval was shot, he was carried into the Speaker's apartments nearby but succumbed to his injuries just minutes later. Surrendering himself willingly, Bellingham was searched and his second pistol was found before he was escorted to the bar of the House and arrested. News of the assassination spread quickly and sent shockwaves through Parliament, with surviving notes from the day recording that the Lord Chancellor had told the House of Lords: "A most melancholy and atrocious circumstance had taken place in the Lobby of the Lower House of Parliament." While the House of Commons was adjourned until the next day, the House of Lords ordered that no one could leave the premises while a witness to the murder, a solicitor, was questioned.

At midnight, Bellingham was taken to Newgate Prison and three days later, he was put on trial for murder at the Old Bailey. Admitting that he would rather have killed Leveson-Gower, Bellingham also gave a statement in which he hoped that the assassination would serve as "a warning to all future ministers and that they will henceforth do the thing that is right". Despite his lawyer's plea of insanity, Bellingham was found guilty and he was hanged on 18 May at the prison.

In the wake of Perceval's death, both the Lords and Commons agreed to arrange financial provision for his family. Parliament passed an act that same year granting the family £50,000 and awarding Perceval's widow, Jane, an annual sum of £2,000. Although Perceval's death was mourned by many, some expressed joy at his assassination, particularly in areas of the country that were suffering from economic hardship due to the Napoleonic Wars.

Perceval was succeeded by another fellow Tory, Robert Jenkinson, 2nd Earl of Liverpool, and the policies from his administration were quickly reversed. Aside from a handful of monuments erected in his honour, including one in Westminster Abbey commissioned by Parliament in 1814, Perceval's death ultimately caused little impact and he has since largely been forgotten, save for the circumstances in which he lost his life.

> **"Infuriated and desperate, Bellingham decided that assassinating Perceval was the only way that he would be heard"**

KILLING LINCOLN

At Ford's Theatre, Washington DC, John Wilkes Booth held a derringer to the back of Lincoln's head and carried out one of history's most infamous murders

Written by Rob Jones

Entering the Presidential Box at Ford's Theatre, President Abraham Lincoln stood before his chair while *Our American Cousin* – the play currently showing that he was late for – was halted, the entire audience rose from their seats and the orchestra played *Hail To The Chief*. Thousands of hands rang out in deafening applause, celebrating the now increasingly evident feats of a man who would go down in history as one of humanity's greatest-ever leaders. Lincoln and the Union had guided the United States of America through one of the most turbulent periods in its short history – a civil war that had claimed thousands of lives and had left the developing country broken. As the applause died away, Lincoln sat back to enjoy the play, little knowing what danger awaited him…

The date was 4 March 1865. The Confederate Army was on its last legs. News had spread of the Union's inevitable victory and the president of the United States – Abraham Lincoln – was standing outside the US Capitol building, its new central dome towering over an assembled crowd numbering in the thousands. Lincoln was about to deliver his second inaugural address as president – the topic: reconstruction of a battered and broken nation. There was to be no grandstanding and political rallying this day, just a pervasive sadness that it had come to this – that over 600,000 Americans lay dead, a newly formed country was reeling financially and, in some states, slavery remained ingrained as part of everyday life. This speech was an opportunity for President Lincoln to outline the way forward. The crowd waited…

The disconcerting and dangerous thing with crowds though – as has been proven again and again through history – is that by their very nature they transform their constituent parts into one homogeneous mass, shrouding individuals.

And this was no more true than on this bright day in March, with a killer standing mere metres away from the US president. Looking down on Lincoln from the rear-left as he gave his heartfelt speech, renowned actor John Wilkes Booth listened and learned. He learned of the president's abhorrence to slavery, the need for the country to rebuild not just its material worth, but also that of the ideas it promoted, and that while the southern Confederacy was to be defeated, their role in carrying the country forward must be ensured. Booth also realised he had "a splendid chance to kill the president where he stood".

Later on, by 17 March 1865, John Wilkes Booth – along with David Herold, George Atzerodt, Lewis Powell (aka Paine), John Surratt and Edmund Spangler, all of whom had been present on 4 March – decided to ditch their recently hatched plan to kidnap Lincoln. The conspirators – all supporters

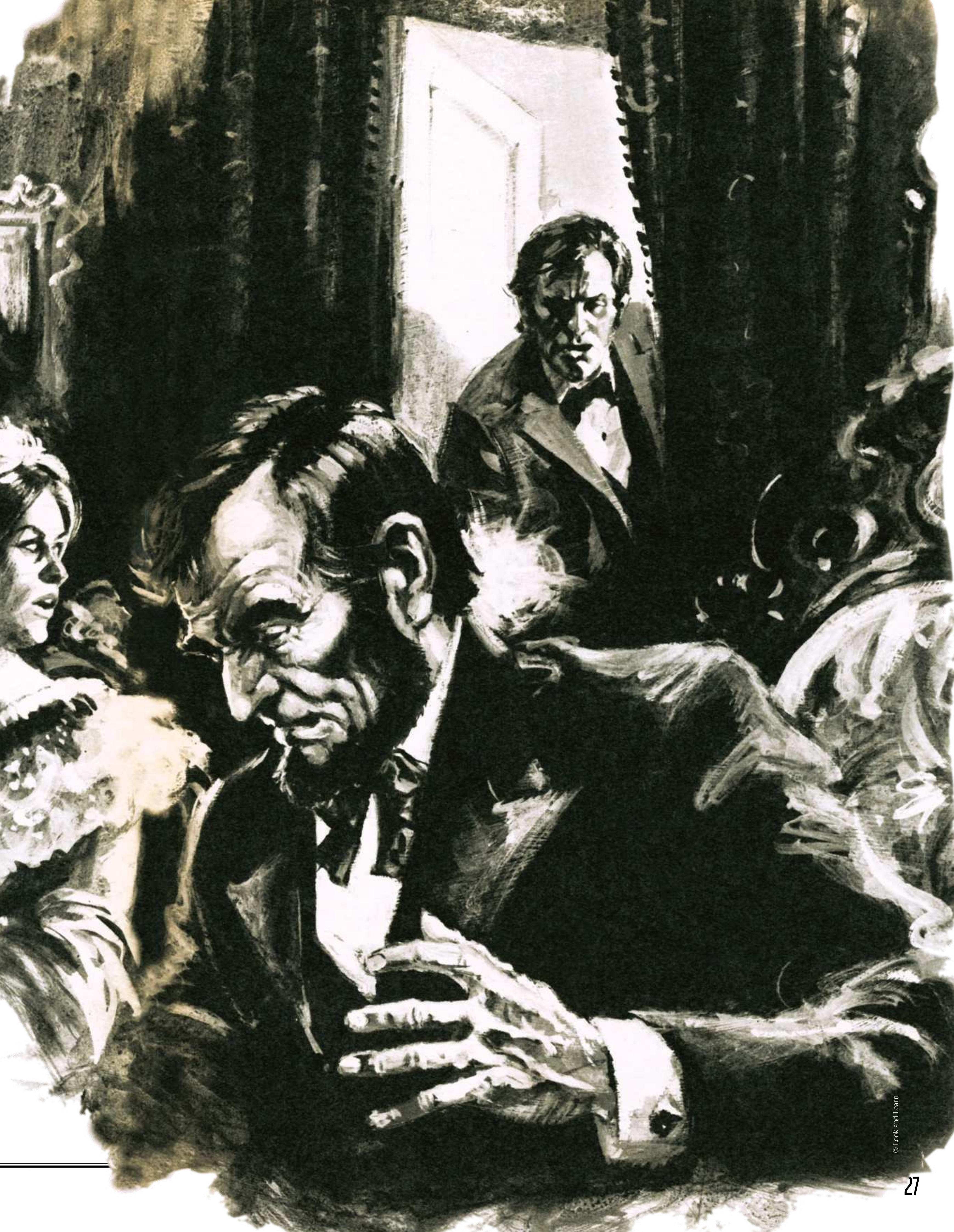
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

CAUSE OF DEATH
GUNSHOT WOUND

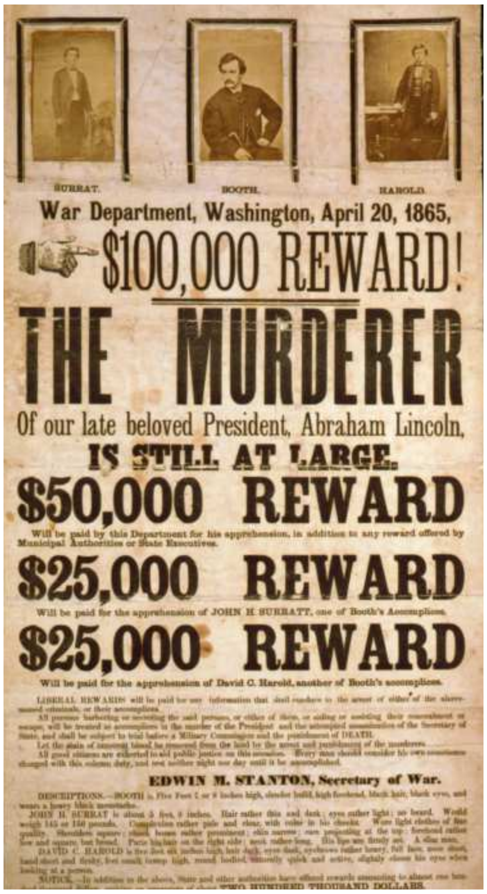
DATE OF ASSASSINATION
15 APRIL 1865

LOCATION
WASHINGTON DC, USA

ASSASSIN
JOHN WILKES BOOTH



© Look and Learn


SURRAT. BOOTH. HAROLD.

War Department, Washington, April 20, 1865,

$100,000 REWARD!

THE MURDERER

Of our late beloved President, Abraham Lincoln,

IS STILL AT LARGE.

$50,000 REWARD

Will be paid by this Department for his apprehension, in addition to any reward offered by Municipal Authorities or State Executives.

$25,000 REWARD

Will be paid for the apprehension of JOHN H. SURRATT, one of Booth's Accomplices.

$25,000 REWARD

Will be paid for the apprehension of David C. Harold, another of Booth's accomplices.

EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS.

of the crumbling Confederacy and enraged by Lincoln's iron resolve to abolish slavery - had intended to hold the president hostage and ransom his return for the release of notable Confederate Army prisoners. However the game had now changed. Lincoln's address had tipped the balance; now the leader of the USA was on the verge of being marked for death, alongside Vice-President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William Seward. The slate was to be wiped clean by Booth and the conspirators so that the Confederacy might rise again from the ashes.

It was now the morning of 14 April 1865. John Wilkes Booth lay in his bed at the National Hotel, Washington DC. Opening his diary, he wrote, 'Our cause being almost lost, something decisive and great must be done.' After eating, Booth headed to Ford's Theatre around midday. As a well-known actor he had a permanent mailbox at the building and so routinely stopped by to collect his post. His murderous scheme was beginning to formulate in his mind…

Booth now firmly believed that Lincoln was hell-bent on destroying the South and everything it stood for, after he had reaffirmed his stance on slavery during a speech on 11 April, where he supported the idea of enfranchising former slaves. Booth, who had attended the talk at the White House just as he had done on Lincoln's inauguration day, had now been tipped over the edge. Provoked by Lincoln's speech he promised to 'put him through', stating that this would be 'the last speech he will ever give'. Kidnapping was now definitely off the cards; Lincoln, Seward and Johnson all must die - an opportune moment was all Booth needed.

Riffling through his letters at Ford's Theatre, that moment fell into his lap. While chatting to the brother of the theatre's owner, John Ford, Booth became aware that both the president and famous war hero General Grant would be attending that very theatre that evening to see the farce *Our American Cousin*. Like a bullet, the final plan exploded into Booth's mind. He knew the theatre's layout well, having performed there just the previous month - indeed, he knew the entrances, exits, stairwells, corridors and backstage passes all like the back of his hand. Lincoln was to step forth into his domain and, as Booth now resolved, he would not be stepping out again.

Bolting across town, Booth went immediately to a boarding house and requested that a package be delivered to the house's sister establishment in Surrattsville, Maryland, also requesting that weapons he had stored previously there be made ready for his arrival. With his first port-of-call following his intended escape from Washington laid out, Booth then - at roughly seven o'clock in the evening - called on his fellow conspirators.

Here Booth outlined his new plan and assigned Powell to kill Seward in his home and Atzerodt to eliminate Johnson at his temporary base at the Kirkwood Hotel. Booth assigned himself the biggest scalp - Lincoln - and ordered them to strike shortly after 10pm that evening. The men, preparing for what lay ahead, disappeared into the night.

Timeline of events

1865

- Lincoln delivers his second inaugural speech. **4 March**

- Booth plots the conspiracy at the Old Soldiers' Home. **6 March**

- Booth shoots and kills President Lincoln at Ford's Theatre. **14 April**

- Lewis Powell tries to kill William Seward but fails. **14 April**

WHO ELSE WAS INVOLVED IN THE PLOT TO TAKE OUT THE UNION LEADERSHIP?

As well as Lincoln, Booth and his fellow conspirators also marked Secretary of State William Seward and Vice-President Andrew Johnson for death, with a planned sweep of the three most important men in the country intended to bring the US Union to its knees, allowing the Confederacy to once more gain a foothold. Booth assigned Lewis Powell to take out Seward, while George Atzerodt was tasked to eliminate Johnson.

LEWIS POWELL

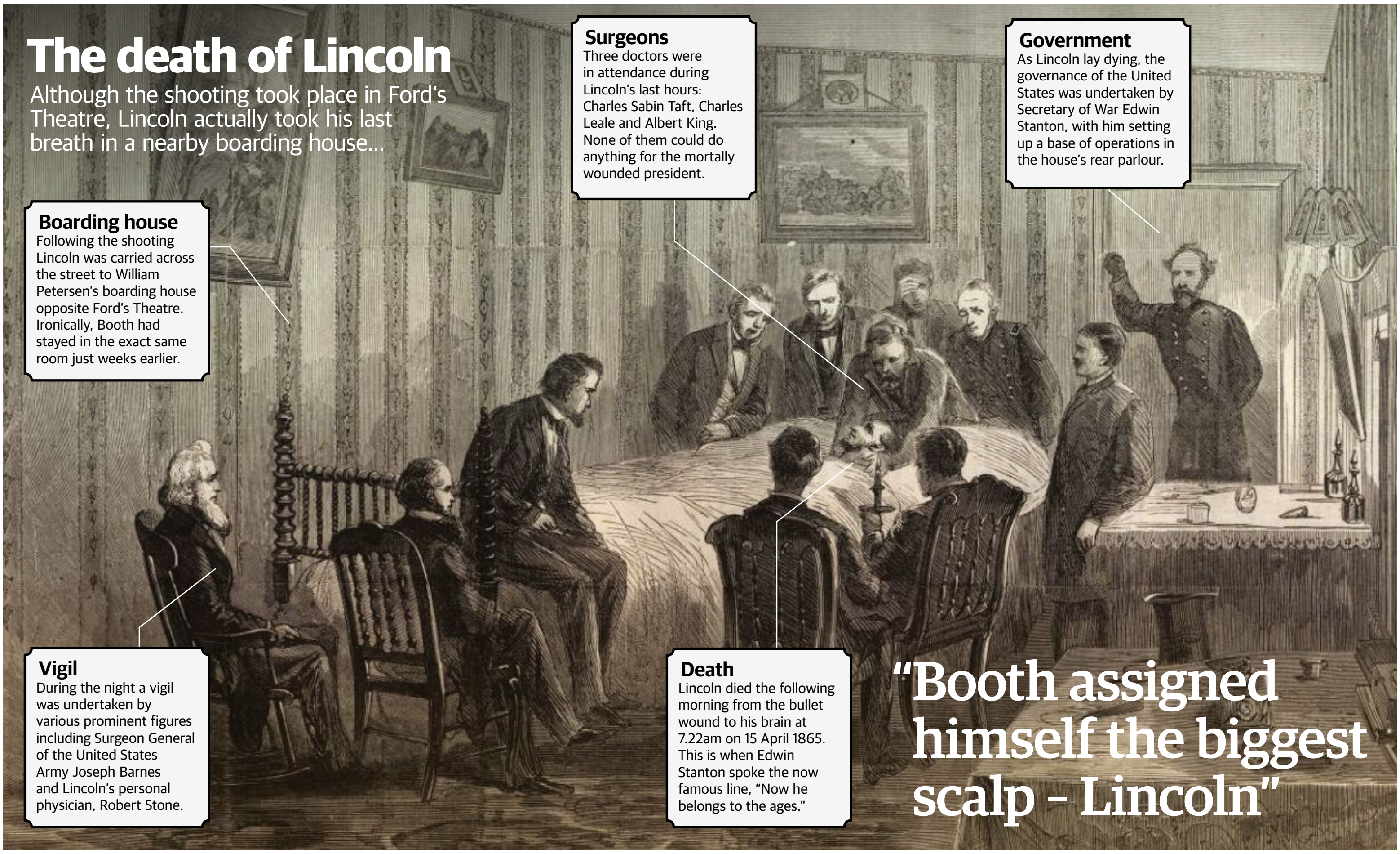
Powell was tasked with killing Seward at his home in Lafayette Park. However, acting as a messenger to gain entry, he was stopped at the top of the dwelling's staircase by Seward's son, Assistant Secretary of State Frederick Seward, who was suspicious of his presence. This led Powell to attack the Assistant Secretary before entering Seward's bedroom and repeatedly attempting to stab the vice-president. However he failed to land a fatal blow and, after fighting with numerous other inhabitants of the house, he fled, allegedly screaming, "I'm mad! I'm mad!".

GEORGE ATZERODT

Atzerodt's tale was nowhere near as eventful. Tasked with going to Kirkwood House in Washington DC where Andrew Johnson was staying, and shooting him at 10.15pm, Atzerodt did no such thing, instead getting drunk in a hotel bar. After talking to the bartender about the vice-president, he left the hotel and threw his knife into the street. At 2am he checked in at the Pennsylvania House Hotel and went to sleep. He was later caught and hung along with three other conspirators.

JOHN SURRATT

Despite playing no part in the eventual attempted murders, John Surratt was one of Booth's original conspirators, agreeing to kidnap and ransom the president for the release of Confederate soldiers. He was quickly accused of playing a key role in the attacks on 14 April, with an arrest warrant issued. Unlike the other conspirators, who were all captured or killed, Surratt managed to escape the manhunt and fled to Canada. He did later return to the USA and was put on trial, but was found not guilty.



The death of Lincoln

Although the shooting took place in Ford's Theatre, Lincoln actually took his last breath in a nearby boarding house…

Surgeons
Three doctors were in attendance during Lincoln's last hours: Charles Sabin Taft, Charles Leale and Albert King. None of them could do anything for the mortally wounded president.

Government
As Lincoln lay dying, the governance of the United States was undertaken by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, with him setting up a base of operations in the house's rear parlour.

Boarding house
Following the shooting Lincoln was carried across the street to William Petersen's boarding house opposite Ford's Theatre. Ironically, Booth had stayed in the exact same room just weeks earlier.

Vigil
During the night a vigil was undertaken by various prominent figures including Surgeon General of the United States Army Joseph Barnes and Lincoln's personal physician, Robert Stone.

Death
Lincoln died the following morning from the bullet wound to his brain at 7.22am on 15 April 1865. This is when Edwin Stanton spoke the now famous line, "Now he belongs to the ages."

> "Booth assigned himself the biggest scalp - Lincoln"

Entering Ford's Theatre Booth took time to re-evaluate the plan. It would be easy to execute the American premier for many reasons. Firstly, Booth could run the warrens of the theatre without thought; secondly he was well known to both the theatre's staff and owner, allowing him to approach his target in plain sight and, thirdly - above all - he now had little regard for his own life, his future erased by a burning sense of injustice. Even if Lincoln's box was guarded, it would be token resistance and all Booth would need to do was make it past the security for a fraction of a second to take his shot.

As the show's last bell rang - indicating the audience should take their seats - Booth began to walk methodically through the mingling crowds. Ascending through the theatre and then up to the first floor via a series of walkways and stairwells, Booth approached a vantage point from which he could watch as his mark took his seat. But, as Booth gazed over to the Presidential Box, his plan came crashing down around his feet: Lincoln wasn't there. He had been deceived - misinformation or Chinese whispers leading him on a wild goose chase. All, it appeared, was lost.

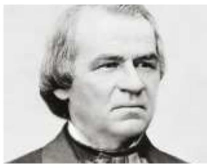
But Lincoln was coming - that much became evident; staff still anticipated the president at Ford's Theatre, even though he would be arriving late. Booth, whose life now revolved around ending President Lincoln's couldn't have left even if he had wanted; all he could do was wait…

It was during the first act of the play when Lincoln, his wife and retinue finally arrived. The show was halted and the president was applauded. Booth then moved with lethal efficiency. He just had to make his approach to the box during the show, get past the guards to Lincoln's box and then… But incredibly, when he arrived at the box, there were no guards. Booth could never have known, but the man charged to accompany the Lincolns during their outing had gone to a nearby bar along with Lincoln's footman and coachman during the play's interval and had failed to return in time for the show's next act.

To think that the most powerful and important man in the entire country was now completely defenceless, to Booth, was almost insanity itself. Steeling himself, Booth approached the box's door, slid it open, waited for a round of laughter from the audience and then, in one fever-dream rush, placed his derringer pistol at point-blank range to the back of Abraham Lincoln's head and fired.

One of history's greatest leaders now had just hours to live.

- George Atzerodt fails to kill Vice-President Andrew Johnson. **14 April**



- President Lincoln dies from the gunshot wound. **15 April**

- Wanted posters are put up offering a reward for Booth's capture. **20 April**

War Department, Washington, April 20, 1865.
$100,000 REWARD!
THE MURDERER

- Lincoln's body is taken to Springfield, IL, via a funeral train. **21 April**

- Booth is gunned down at the Garrett Farm, VA. **26 April**

- Mary Surratt, Lewis Powell, David Herold and George Atzerodt are hung. **7 July**

THE PRESIDENT WHO DIED IN AGONY

While James Garfield survived the initial shooting, his assassin's bullet ensured he suffered a long and painful demise

Written by Jonathan O'Callaghan

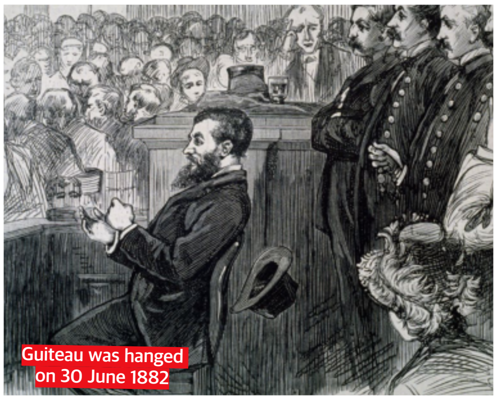
Republican James Abram Garfield became the 20th president of the United States on 4 March 1881 in somewhat unusual circumstances. At the June 1880 Republican National Convention, it had looked like either James G Blaine (backed by the moderates) or Ulysses S Grant (backed by the 'Stalwarts') would be picked for the Republican presidential nominee. But after a deadlock between the two camps, Garfield found himself becoming the de facto next choice, seemingly betraying his own nominee, the lesser-fancied John Sherman.

Nonetheless, it was Garfield who ended up entering the 1880 presidential race against Democrat Winfield Scott Hancock as the Republican nominee. And despite both having an almost equal share of the 9.2 million votes cast in the election, Garfield emerged victorious with 214 Electoral College votes to Hancock's 155, thanks to strong support in the north of the country for Garfield, who was billed as a self-made man.

Upon becoming president, Garfield became committed to civil service reform and advancement of civil rights. His early presidency had been on rocky ground with other Republicans, who disproved of some of his appointments, but he was ambitious. He wanted to develop a new universal education system to help African-Americans, and he also began reform of the Post Office Department. Militarily, he looked to reform the navy, and wanted to renegotiate a treaty to remove Britain from the construction of the Panama Canal. He looked far beyond American borders too, and had eyed up treaties with countries as far afield as Korea.

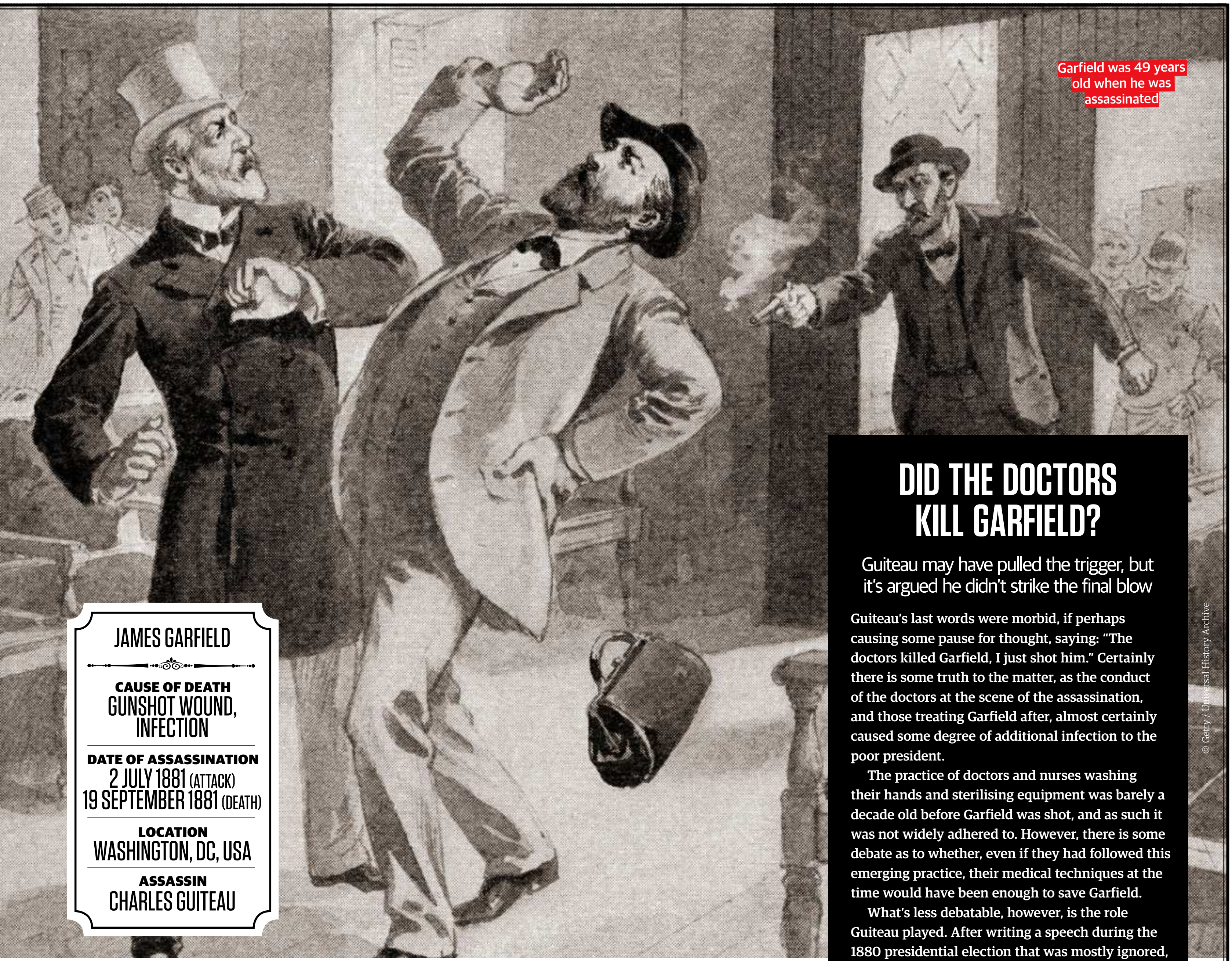
But Garfield's time as leader of the United States would be incredibly short-lived. After 79 days, less than four months into his presidency, he was shot in the back by Charles J Guiteau on 2 July 1881, and died a few weeks later. It remains the second shortest time anyone has remained president of the US, behind William Harrison who died after just 31 days in office in 1841.

On the day of the shooting, Garfield was at the Baltimore and Potomac train station in Washington, DC, on his way to a summer vacation. Unknown to all, however, was that the unstable Guiteau was there with a gun inside the waiting room of the station. At 39 years old, Illinois native Guiteau had held a number of jobs including a lawyer and salesman, and he had been stalking the president for weeks, waiting to kill him. Guiteau maniacally believed a speech he had written had helped Garfield win the presidency, and he believed the president owed him a political debt, which had not been paid.



Guiteau was hanged on 30 June 1882

© Getty / DEA Picture Library



Garfield was 49 years old when he was assassinated

© Getty / Universal History Archive

JAMES GARFIELD

CAUSE OF DEATH
GUNSHOT WOUND, INFECTION

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
2 JULY 1881 (ATTACK)
19 SEPTEMBER 1881 (DEATH)

LOCATION
WASHINGTON, DC, USA

ASSASSIN
CHARLES GUITEAU

Entering the station at 9.20am, Garfield was being escorted to his train by Blaine. But as the men walked through the waiting room, Guiteau snuck up behind Garfield and shot him twice. The first shot only grazed his arm, but the second hit the president in the lower back, causing him to fall to the ground and exclaim, "My God, what is this?" Guiteau was led away by police after attempting to flee, while Garfield lay on the floor.

What followed was a cavalcade of errors that would lead to the president's death. By some accounts, ten doctors examined him, looking for the bullet that had struck him in the back, but they were all unable to locate it - it had been wedged in by his pancreas. Garfield may have survived the incident, but as the doctors prodded at his wound with their dirty hands, a not uncommon practice at the time, they likely only served to give him an infection that would eventually kill him. The president was then taken to the White House, where doctors began a gruesome process of trying to locate the bullet by widening the wound and poking inside his body. As a result, Garfield contracting sepsis, an infection that causes the body's organs to stop working.

Garfield clung to life, however, and would survive for another 80 days. Finally, after being transported to his seaside cottage in New Jersey, the president was ultimately pronounced dead by the oddly named Dr Doctor William Bills at 10.35pm on 19 September 1881 after suffering a heart attack and other ailments.

Guiteau was sentenced to death, despite pleading not guilty owing to insanity, and was hanged on 20 June 1882 in Washington, DC. While there is some contention as to whether the gunshot would have killed Garfield anyway were it not for the botched job by his doctors, there was little doubt that Garfield's final days on Earth were tortuous ones. He was succeeded by his vice president, Chester Alan Arthur, who served a single term.

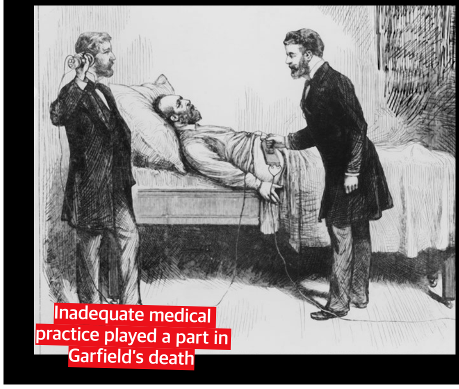
DID THE DOCTORS KILL GARFIELD?

Guiteau may have pulled the trigger, but it's argued he didn't strike the final blow

Guiteau's last words were morbid, if perhaps causing some pause for thought, saying: "The doctors killed Garfield, I just shot him." Certainly there is some truth to the matter, as the conduct of the doctors at the scene of the assassination, and those treating Garfield after, almost certainly caused some degree of additional infection to the poor president.

The practice of doctors and nurses washing their hands and sterilising equipment was barely a decade old before Garfield was shot, and as such it was not widely adhered to. However, there is some debate as to whether, even if they had followed this emerging practice, their medical techniques at the time would have been enough to save Garfield.

What's less debatable, however, is the role Guiteau played. After writing a speech during the 1880 presidential election that was mostly ignored, Guiteau delusionally believed it had enabled Garfield to beat his opponent. He frequently visited the White House and even managed to meet Garfield and asked for a position in office, which he was denied, leading to his belief that God wanted him to kill Garfield. Ultimately through his actions, and the inadequacy of medical practice in 1880, he was successful.



Inadequate medical practice played a part in Garfield's death

© Getty / Fotosearch / Stringer

MCKINLEY MEETS HIS MURDERER

Despite fears for his safety, William McKinley remained determined to meet his public, but alas he came face to face with his assassin

Written by Jessica Leggett

After he was re-elected for a second term, President William McKinley embarked on a tour around the nation following on from his inauguration in March 1901. He arrived in Buffalo, New York, on 4 September and the next day, he gave a well-received speech at the Pan-American Exposition. On the 6th, McKinley spent the morning at Niagara Falls before returning to the Exposition that afternoon to attend a public reception that was being held in his honour at the Temple of Music.

Standing at the head of a receiving line, McKinley smiled as he greeted the people who had come to meet him, shaking their hands one by one. Normally, those approaching the president were expected to empty their hands and be inspected by his bodyguards, but the rules were relaxed a little due to the fact it was a hot day and many people kept hold of their handkerchiefs and so on. At around 4.07pm, McKinley reached out to shake the hand of the next man in the queue when all of a sudden, the deafening sound of two gunshots rang out. The man, Leon Czolgosz, had quickly pulled out a .32 Iver Johnson revolver that he had concealed in a white handkerchief and fired once into the president's stomach before firing again, after realising that the first bullet was deflected by a button on McKinley's waistcoat.

As the president fell backwards, Czolgosz cried out "I done my duty!" before he was immediately seized by the McKinley's bodyguards and members of the crowd. The president managed to gasp, "Be easy with him, boys," before managing to speak to his personal secretary, George Cortelyou, beside him and say, "My wife - be careful, Cortelyou, how you tell her - oh, be careful."

Rushed to a hospital for emergency surgery, McKinley's doctors were initially optimistic that the president would survive the assassination attempt despite the fact that the surgeons had failed to find the bullet due to his weight. However, gangrene soon took hold in the bullet wound and the president passed away from his injuries just over a week later on 14 September 1901.

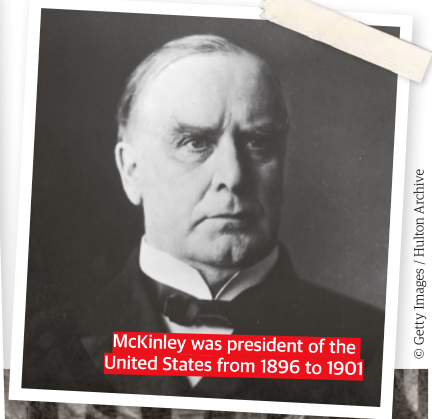
After he shot McKinley, Czolgosz was moved to the police headquarters nearby before he was transferred to Auburn State Prison. A man with anarchist sentiments, Czolgosz freely pleaded guilty that he had shot the president, claiming, "I killed the president because he was the enemy of the people, the good working people. I am not sorry for my crime." He had purchased the gun he used to shoot McKinley three days before the assassination and he had considered attempting to kill the president when the latter first arrived in Buffalo and again during his speech at the Exposition, but Czolgosz changed his mind both times when he saw that McKinley was well-protected.

Showing no remorse for his actions, Czolgosz was found guilty of first-degree murder and he was executed by electric chair on 29 October. His family were denied permission to bury the body and Czolgosz was subsequently interred in the prison grounds, with sulfuric acid poured over his coffin to quickly disintegrate his body.

McKinley's death was widely mourned and there was a backlash in the media regarding the lack of protection given to the presidents. However, McKinley was never that concerned with security himself, despite previous presidential assassinations. The president enjoyed meeting the public at every opportunity and insisted on attending the public reception at the Exposition, even though Cortelyou had attempted twice to remove it from his schedule over fears for McKinley's safety. On top of this, the president wanted to learn about the local dignitaries he was meeting and so the bodyguard that usually stood to his left was replaced with a local guard for the receiving line.

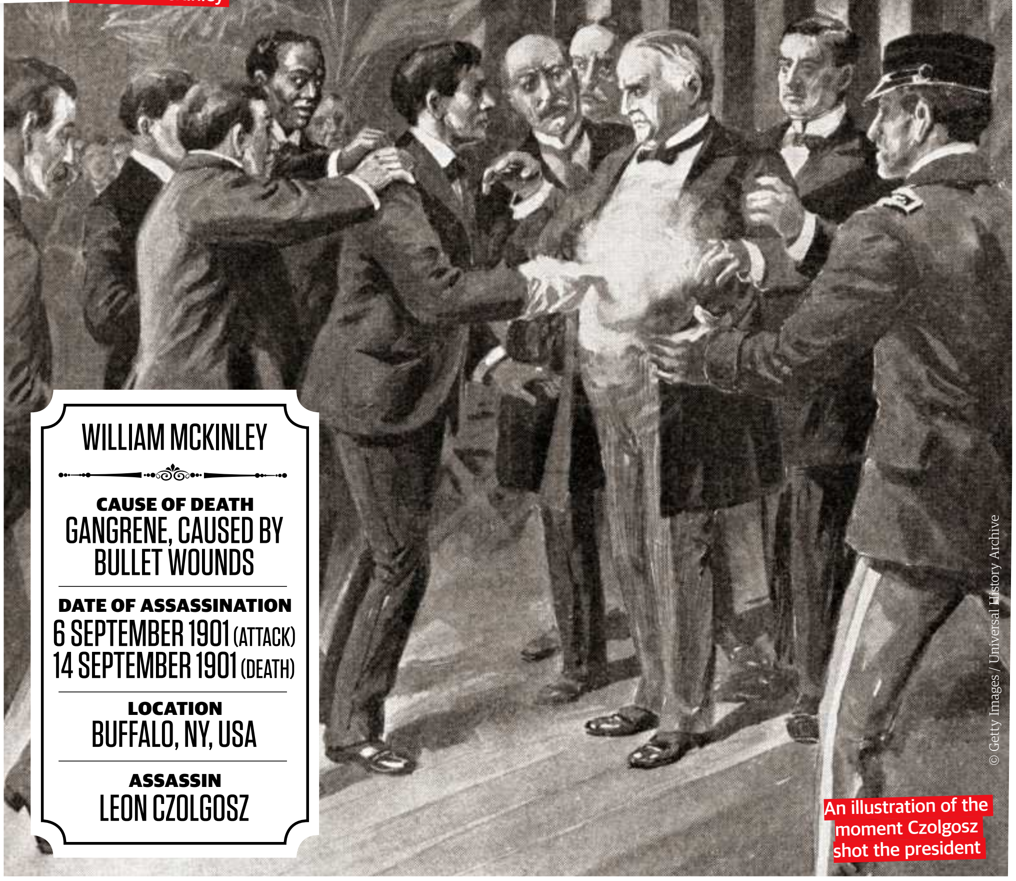
Nonetheless, Congress eventually passed legislation in response to the assassination that handed the task of presidential security to the Secret Service, who had already been tasked with protecting McKinley's successor, Theodore Roosevelt, full-time since the assassination – thereby triggering the formation of the law enforcement agency as we know it today.

Anarchist Leon Czolgosz shot President McKinley



McKinley was president of the United States from 1896 to 1901

© Getty Images / Hulton Archive



An illustration of the moment Czolgosz shot the president

© Getty Images / Universal History Archive

WILLIAM MCKINLEY

CAUSE OF DEATH
GANGRENE, CAUSED BY BULLET WOUNDS

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
6 SEPTEMBER 1901 (ATTACK)
14 SEPTEMBER 1901 (DEATH)

LOCATION
BUFFALO, NY, USA

ASSASSIN
LEON CZOLGOSZ

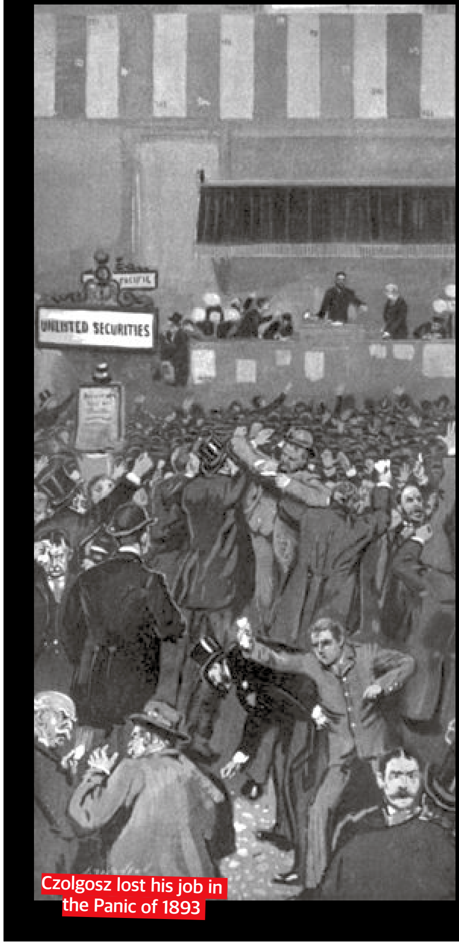
THE RISE OF ANARCHY

An economic depression got President McKinley elected, but it would also pave the way for his untimely death

McKinley's assassin, Leon Czolgosz, turned to anarchism after losing his job as a mill worker in Cleveland during a period of serious economic depression which became known as the Panic of 1893. The anarchist movement had grown in Europe, culminating in a series of assassinations including the murder of King Umberto I of Italy in 1900, causing concern in the United States.

During his interrogation, Czolgosz admitted that he had been inspired to kill the president after hearing a speech by famous anarchist Emma Goldman, whom he deeply admired, in May 1901. He believed that he had to do something to promote the anarchist movement and so he chose to assassinate the president, as he saw McKinley as the embodiment of the injustice in American society which he despised.

Although Czolgosz acted alone, it was feared that there was an anarchist conspiracy afoot and Goldman was subsequently arrested and released, along with other anarchists. Ironically, although Czolgosz's anger originally stemmed from the loss of his job, McKinley's was elected president largely in response to the Panic of 1893 and the economy recovered under his administration.



Czolgosz lost his job in the Panic of 1893

THE LISBON REGICIDE

A shocking attack that proved to be the beginning of the end for the Portuguese monarchy

Written by Scott Reeves

Nobody paid any attention to the man who walked into the road after the royal carriage had passed – not until he pulled a Winchester rifle from under his coat, dropped to one knee and fired. The bullet hit King Carlos I's neck. Then all hell broke loose.

Another gunman started to fire a revolver at the royal carriage as he moved towards it, jumping on the step and shooting at the king at point-blank range. The first attacker hit Carlos I again, this time in the shoulder. Prince Royal Luís Filipe, the heir to the throne, managed to fire four shots from his revolver at the assassin on the carriage step but was hit twice, once in the chest by the attacker on the step, once in the head by the gunman with the rifle.

Queen Amélie, desperate to do something in the chaos around her, swung at the assassin with her bunch of flowers. Infante Manuel, second son of the king, attempted in vain to stop the blood pulsing from his brother's head with a pocket handkerchief. Nobles accompanying the royal party leapt onto the royal carriage to help. A soldier who attempted to subdue one of the assassins was shot in the leg. As the carriage sped to the safety of the nearby Royal Naval Arsenal, the two assassins – Manuel Buíça and Alfredo Luís da Costa – were shot and killed by the police. So was another man, identified by the crowd as a third culprit, despite having nothing to do with the plot. The king was dead on arrival at the arsenal infirmary, and his heir died minutes later. The deaths of the assassins hindered the subsequent investigation of the infamous Lisbon Regicide, although their motives were clear: they were republicans who thought that the monarchy must fall for the good of Portugal. For decades, the country had been slipping into a political crisis. The Regenerator Party and Progressive Party took turns to govern in an unofficial system of rotation through rigged elections, but neither could improve Portugal's sluggish economy or halt the widespread corruption that plagued the nation's government. The 1890 Ultimatum, in which Britain demanded that Portugal withdraw their claims to territory in southern Africa, was a national embarrassment for which King Carlos was unfairly blamed.

> **"The bullet hit King Carlos I's neck. Then all hell broke loose"**

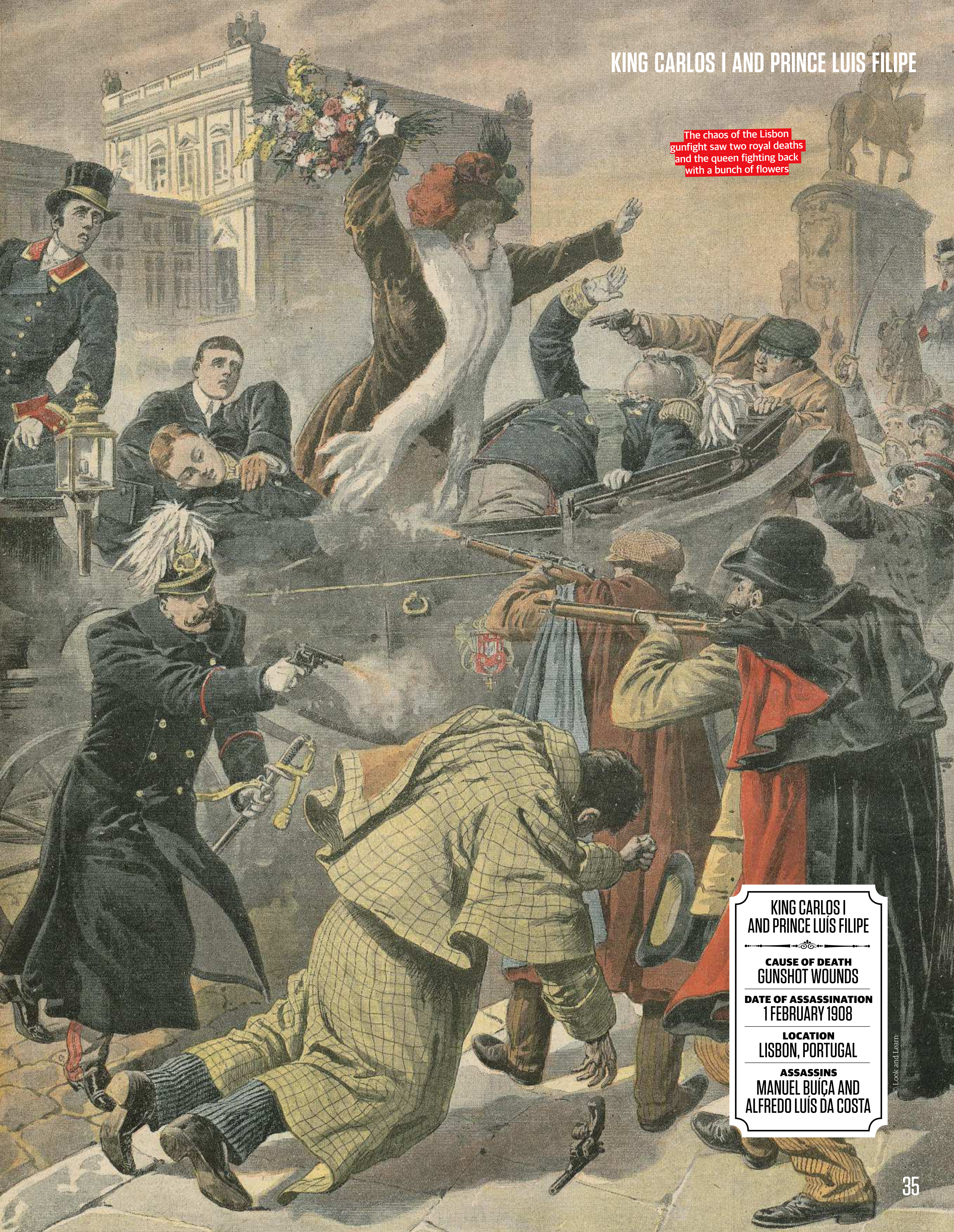
So volatile did the political situation become that the Regenerator and Progressive Parties began to split into factions while the newly formed Republican Party openly demanded the abolition of the monarchy. João Franco, leader of the splinter Liberal Regenerator Party, was appointed Prime Minister in May 1906 but lacked enough support to form a coalition.

Carlos I had previously claimed that "the king reigns, but does not govern". However, the deepening crisis forced him to enter the political arena. The king agreed to dissolve the Cortes (Portuguese parliament) and allow Franco wide-ranging powers, including the right to call elections only when it suited him, censorship of the press and the arrest of political opponents. The inevitable effect was to further heighten political tension. Republicans continued to rail against Franco and Carlos I in the Cortes – even the pro-monarchist Regenerator and Progressive Parties condemned the monarch's actions.

Yet the opposition went much further than inflammatory rhetoric. Dissident republican groups like the Carbonária found that their revolutionary plans were now backed by mainstream politicians. On 28 January 1908, an attempted coup d'état was foiled by the police. Among those arrested were prominent republican leaders. Just two days later, the king signed a harsh decree imposing exile without trial for anybody that was accused of subverting public order and made plans to return to Lisbon from his countryside retreat on 1 February.

What he didn't know was that a second conspiracy was already in process. Weapons originally intended for the failed coup were hustled to a mansion, where they were collected by 18 men who would lie in wait for the king on his return to the capital. Eight were stationed in the Terreiro do Paço, where Manuel Buíça and Alfredo Luís da Costa fired the fatal shots, the other ten were further along the route.

When King Carlos I signed the decree on 30 January, he realised that the draconian measure would be supremely unpopular and declared, "I sign my sentence of death, but you gentlemen want it that way." Not even he realised he would be proven correct in just two days.



The chaos of the Lisbon gunfight saw two royal deaths and the queen fighting back with a bunch of flowers

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KING CARLOS I AND PRINCE LUÍS FILIPE

CAUSE OF DEATH
GUNSHOT WOUNDS

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
1 FEBRUARY 1908

LOCATION
LISBON, PORTUGAL

ASSASSINS
MANUEL BUÍÇA AND ALFREDO LUÍS DA COSTA

THE SHOT HEARD AROUND THE WORLD

The murder that led to the slaughter of millions

Written by Rob Jones

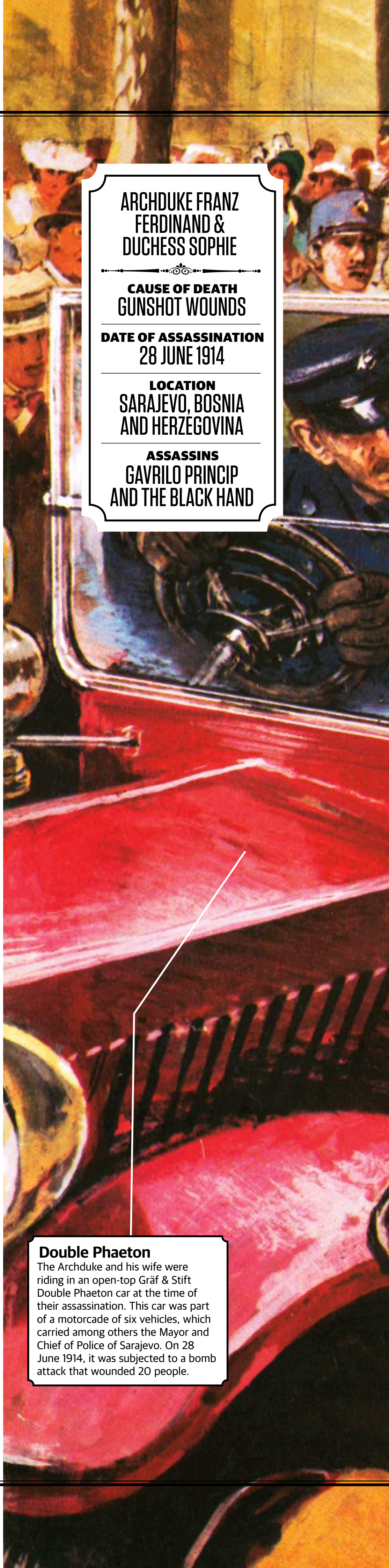
Of all the assassinations throughout history, that of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, was both one of the most climactic and far-reaching in terms of consequences. The shooting of Ferdinand on 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo, the modern-day capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, shook the entire world and was a major step towards the outbreak of the First World War. Many historians argue that the shooting led to the deaths of almost 10 million soldiers and countless other civilians.

The assassination was born out of a desire for Austria-Hungary's South-Slav provinces to be split from their vast empire and incorporated into Greater Serbia; a desire which had led to heightened disputes between Serbia and its neighbouring countries. This came to a head in late 1913 when Bosnian Orthodox Serb Danilo Ilić, the leader of a Serbian Black Hand terrorist cell in Sarajevo, decided to go and speak to one of the organisation's founders – Serbian Colonel C. A. Popovic. The Black Hand was a secret military society tasked with reclaiming the historical Serbian territories currently controlled by Austria-Hungary or other powers. Its motto was 'Unification or Death' and it specialised in covert operations designed to further Serbia's cause. However, Ilić no longer believed engagement in such a manner would lead to success, making a case to Popovic that a campaign of direct action should be taken instead. After temporarily considering the Governor of Bosnia as an assassination target, it was eventually agreed that Archduke Ferdinand would be their victim.

The plan was to strike during the Archduke's visit to the city in June. The weaponry for the assassination arrived with a team of young Serbian and Bosnian Serb assassins that Ilić had recruited on 26 May, and by 4 June the six assassins were all in Sarajevo and ready to act. Along with a selection of hand guns, bombs and knives, Ilić also distributed suicide pills to the assassins – truly 'unification or death'. On the following day, Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated, along with his wife Duchess Sophie.

Despite the plans, the assassins and their masters in the Black Hand were caught, imprisoned or executed. The death of one man set in train a series of events that led to the Empire of Austria-Hungary issuing an ultimatum in July of that year. This included a list of demands that Serbia was to accept within 48 hours or face having Austria-Hungary's ambassador removed from the country.

Serbia did not accept, and on 28 July both sides mobilised their armies. Due to a series of alliances struck between the Great Powers of Europe, this forced Russia, France, Britain and Germany, among others, to take sides and begin the most brutal, bloody and costly war that the world had ever seen.



ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND & DUCHESS SOPHIE

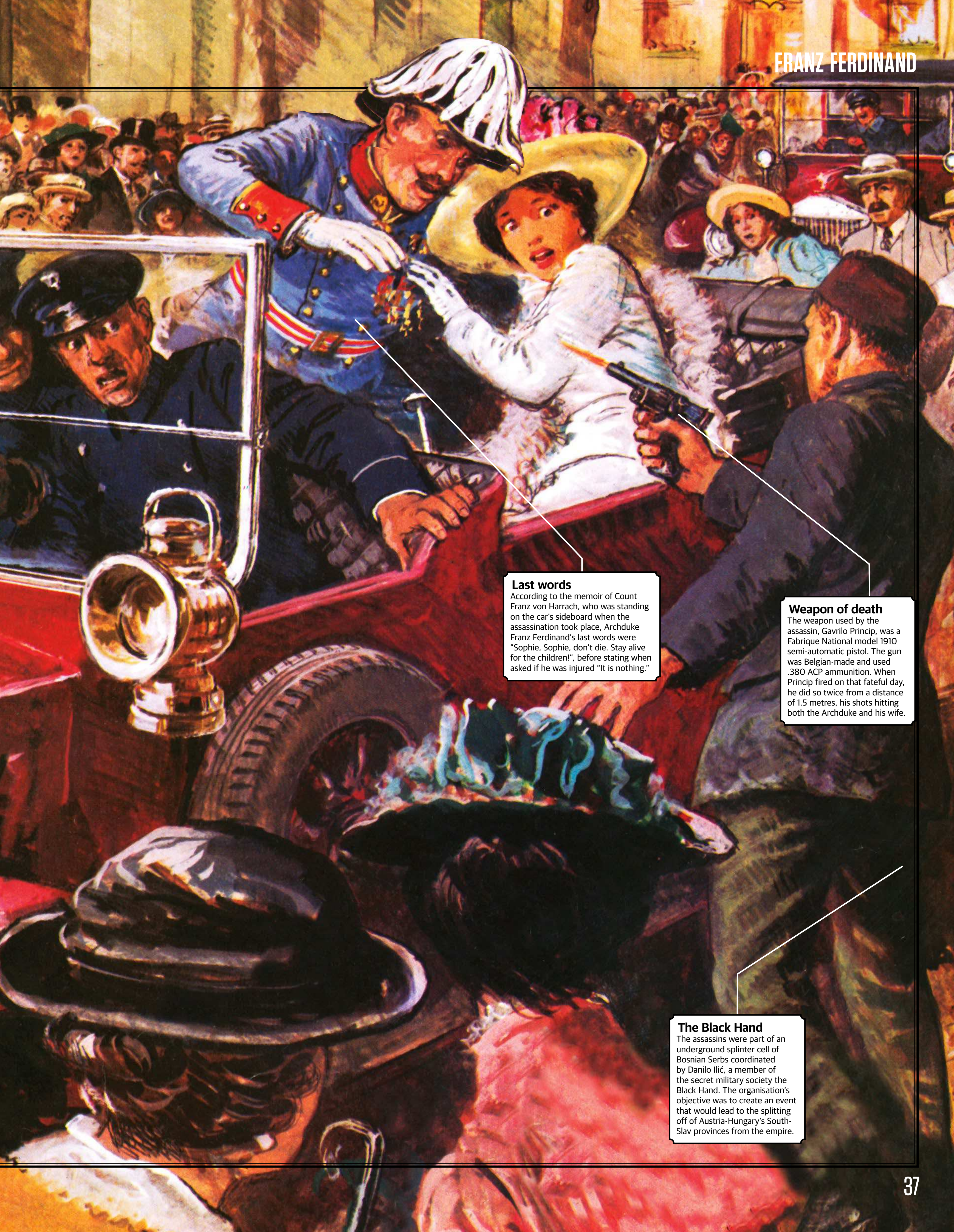
CAUSE OF DEATH
GUNSHOT WOUNDS

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
28 JUNE 1914

LOCATION
SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

ASSASSINS
GAVRILO PRINCIP AND THE BLACK HAND

Double Phaeton
The Archduke and his wife were riding in an open-top Gräf & Stift Double Phaeton car at the time of their assassination. This car was part of a motorcade of six vehicles, which carried among others the Mayor and Chief of Police of Sarajevo. On 28 June 1914, it was subjected to a bomb attack that wounded 20 people.



Last words

According to the memoir of Count Franz von Harrach, who was standing on the car's sideboard when the assassination took place, Archduke Franz Ferdinand's last words were "Sophie, Sophie, don't die. Stay alive for the children!", before stating when asked if he was injured "It is nothing."

Weapon of death

The weapon used by the assassin, Gavrilo Princip, was a Fabrique National model 1910 semi-automatic pistol. The gun was Belgian-made and used .380 ACP ammunition. When Princip fired on that fateful day, he did so twice from a distance of 1.5 metres, his shots hitting both the Archduke and his wife.

The Black Hand

The assassins were part of an underground splinter cell of Bosnian Serbs coordinated by Danilo Ilić, a member of the secret military society the Black Hand. The organisation's objective was to create an event that would lead to the splitting off of Austria-Hungary's South-Slav provinces from the empire.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

FRANZ FERDINAND

FOR HIS KINGDOM

Archduke of Austria, Royal Prince of Hungary and Bohemia Franz Ferdinand was unpopular among Serbs, who wanted to reclaim land.

STRENGTHS A leader of great energy and physical prowess.

WEAKNESS Distant and prone to bouts of hysteria.

1911 DOUBLE PHAETON

AN EXPENSIVE LUXURY

Offering good speed and excellent all-round visibility, the 1911 Double Phaeton was considered a luxury item for the time.

STRENGTHS Much more mobile than foot or horse-mounted units.

WEAKNESS Poorly armoured and cumbersome in tight spaces.

STEYR M1912 PISTOL

DURABLE AND POPULAR

The Austrian-made semi-automatic pistol offered impressive stopping power at short range and was small enough to be easily concealed.

STRENGTHS A reliable pistol carried by Austria-Hungary police and army.

WEAKNESS Poor shooting accuracy over long distances.

01 MOTORCADE FORMS

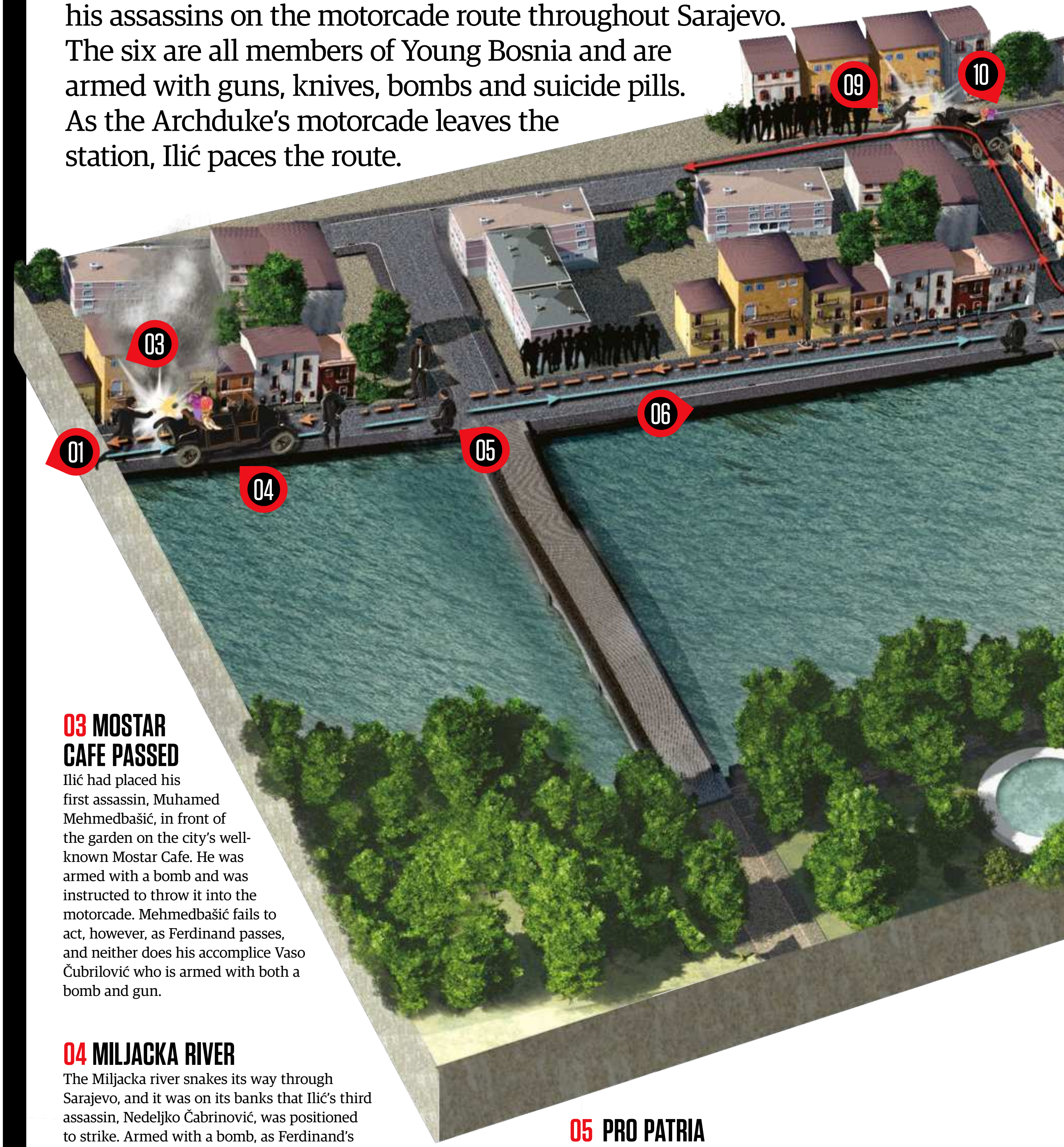
On the morning of the 28th Archduke Franz Ferdinand arrives by train in Sarajevo. Ferdinand is met by Governor Oskar Potiorek and they are led to a waiting motorcade. They step into the third car of six, a Gräf & Stift 1911 Double Phaeton, an open-topped sports car.

10 UNITED IN DEATH

When he thought all had been lost, that he had failed his and Ilić's cause, Princip saw a second chance. Like a flash Princip bolted towards the car and drawing his semi-automatic pistol fired twice from a distance of approximately 1.5 metres. The first shot hit the Archduke in his jugular vein, the second hit his wife in the abdomen. Both were killing shots and Sophie died almost immediately, with the Archduke following minutes later.

02 THE TRAP IS SET

Assassination mastermind Danilo Ilić begins to distribute his assassins on the motorcade route throughout Sarajevo. The six are all members of Young Bosnia and are armed with guns, knives, bombs and suicide pills. As the Archduke's motorcade leaves the station, Ilić paces the route.



03 MOSTAR CAFE PASSED

Ilić had placed his first assassin, Muhamed Mehmedbašić, in front of the garden on the city's well-known Mostar Cafe. He was armed with a bomb and was instructed to throw it into the motorcade. Mehmedbašić fails to act, however, as Ferdinand passes, and neither does his accomplice Vaso Čubrilović who is armed with both a bomb and gun.

04 MILJACKA RIVER

The Miljacka river snakes its way through Sarajevo, and it was on its banks that Ilić's third assassin, Nedeljko Čabrinović, was positioned to strike. Armed with a bomb, as Ferdinand's motorcade passes at 10:10am he throws the device directly at the Double Phaeton. It rebounds off the convertible's folded roof and bounces under the car following Ferdinand's. The bomb explodes, totalling the car and leaving a crater in the road. 20 passers by are hit by debris and wounded.

05 PRO PATRIA

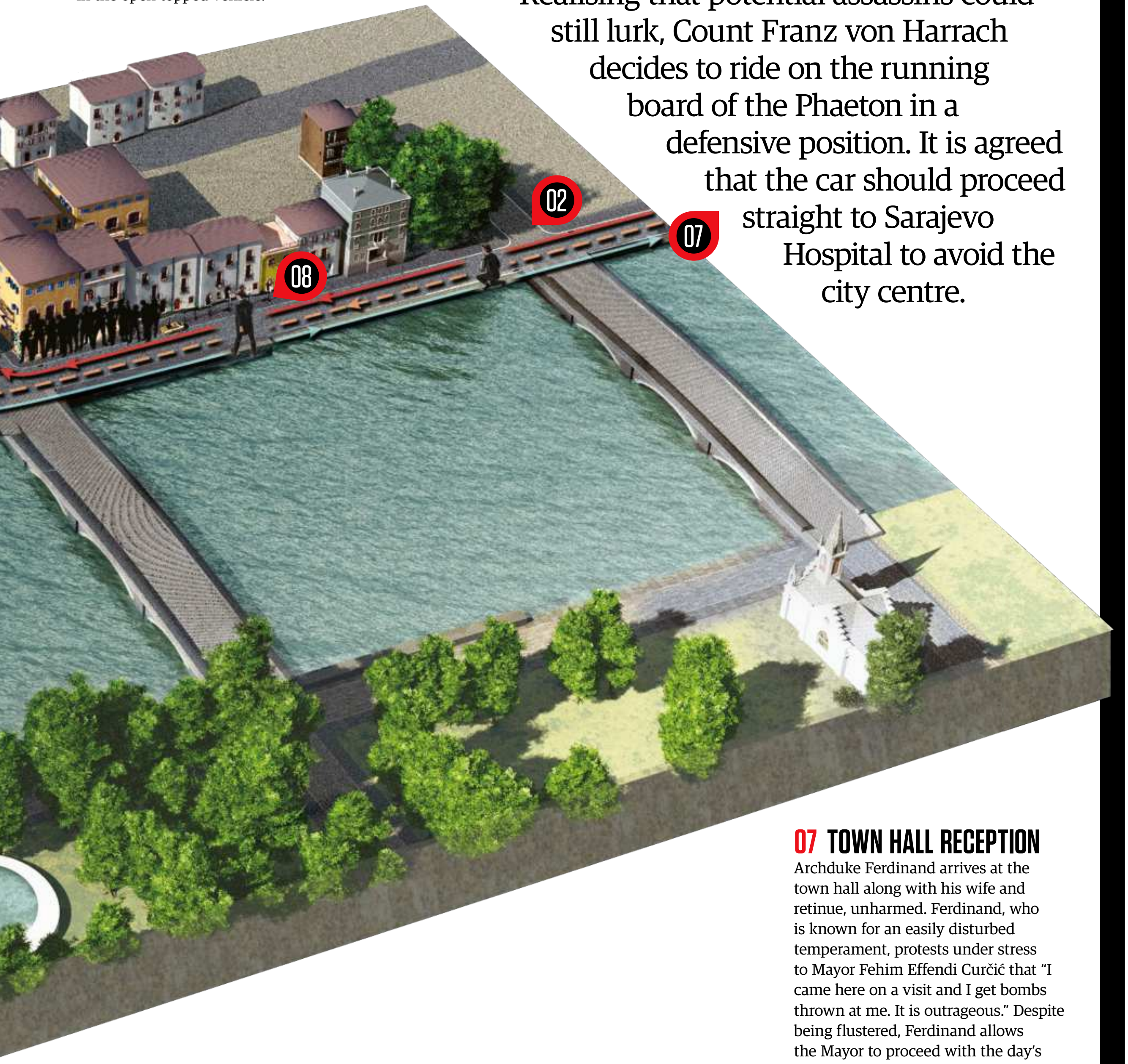
Čabrinović, deadly deed undertaken, is quickly identified and as he is closed in on, quickly swallows his cyanide pill and jumps from the banks into the Miljacka. The pill does not have the desired effect and after vomiting severely, he lives. He is dragged from the river by police and set upon by survivors of the blast.

09 PRINCIP'S SECOND CHANCE

Having failed to attack Ferdinand, Gavrilo Princip proceeds to a nearby food shop, Schiller's delicatessen. Upon leaving the eatery, he realises that he is staring at the royal car. The car's driver had taken a wrong turning on its way to the hospital and was now reversing with the Archduke, his wife and retinue still inside in the open-topped vehicle.

08 ADDED PROTECTION

By 10:45am, the reception for the Archduke is completed and he and his retinue leave the city's hall once more. Realising that potential assassins could still lurk, Count Franz von Harrach decides to ride on the running board of the Phaeton in a defensive position. It is agreed that the car should proceed straight to Sarajevo Hospital to avoid the city centre.



07 TOWN HALL RECEPTION

Archduke Ferdinand arrives at the town hall along with his wife and retinue, unharmed. Ferdinand, who is known for an easily disturbed temperament, protests under stress to Mayor Fehim Effendi Curčić that "I came here on a visit and I get bombs thrown at me. It is outrageous." Despite being flustered, Ferdinand allows the Mayor to proceed with the day's ceremonial speech, and then attempts to brush aside the attack by thanking the people of the city for their ovations.

06 HIGH-SPEED GETAWAY

The remaining motorcade, having realised they were under attack, sped away from the blast site towards Sarajevo town hall, leaving the disabled car behind. Now travelling at high speed, the motorcade screams by Ilić's remaining three assassins – Cvjetko Popović, Gavrilo Princip and Trifun Grabež. They are unable to make their moves.

THE BLACK HAND

DANILO ILIĆ

TEACHER TURNED KILLER

The teacher turned assassin Danilo Ilić became radicalised in the early 1900s. On his capture, he admitted everything to try to avoid death.

STRENGTHS Well trained in planning covert operations.

WEAKNESS No real military experience and tactical flexibility.

ASSASSINS

LURKING IN THE SHADOWS

Some were well-trained by the militaries loyal to the ruler they were trying to kill, others were mere amateurs with personal grudges.

STRENGTHS Covert units that easily blend into crowds.

WEAKNESS Not heavily armed and rely on shock tactics to be effective.

FN 1910 PISTOL

ENDURING WEAPON

Remaining in production until 1983, the simple design and compact reliability of the FN 1910 made it an enduring firearm.

STRENGTHS Compact and can be fired in six-round bursts.

WEAKNESS Poor shooting accuracy over long distances.

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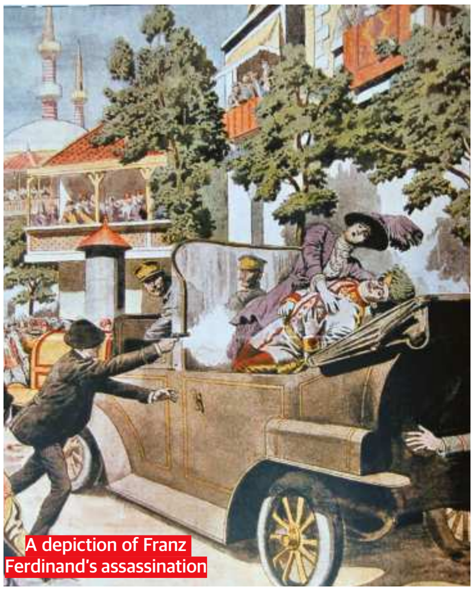
What happened next?

Archduke Franz Ferdinand's murder had devastating and far-reaching consequences. The world would never be the same again...

THE ASSASSINATION OF FRANZ FERDINAND

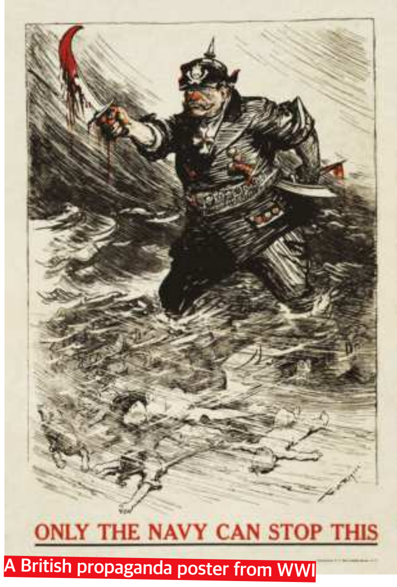
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
28 JUNE 1914


A depiction of Franz Ferdinand's assassination

GERMAN U-BOAT CAMPAIGN

ATLANTIC OCEAN, NORTH SEA AND MEDITERRANEAN SEA
28 JULY 1914 - 11 NOVEMBER 1918

The U-boat Campaign was an effort by the German military to destroy the trade routes of the Entente Powers. With the British Empire relying heavily on imports for food and supplies, the German U-boats were commanded to sink all Allied or neutral ships on sight. This led to the sinking of almost 5,000 ships and pushed Prime Minister Lloyd George to order an armed navy convoy for all ships carrying provisions, equipment or weapons to the British Isles.


ONLY THE NAVY CAN STOP THIS
A British propaganda poster from WWI

WWI timeline

Austria declares war
Blaming the Serbian government for Franz Ferdinand's assassination, Austria-Hungary formally declares war on Serbia.
28 June 1914

Franz Ferdinand

1914

Germany declares war on Russia
Germany offers support to Austro-Hungarians and Russia, allied with Serbia, mobilises. In response, Germany declares war on Russia.
1 August 1914

Germany invades
Germany declares war on France and implements the Schlieffen Plan, invading Belgium. Britain orders Germany to withdraw.
3 August 1914

A strategic meeting in WWI

Britain declares war on Germany
Germany refuses to withdraw from neutral Belgium and as a result Britain declares war on Germany.
4 August 1914

The Battle of Tannenberg
The Russian army march into Prussia, but struggle to get supplies through, suffering a crushing defeat to the Germans.
26 August 1914

Hindenburg at Tannenfeld

Turkey joins the war
Turkey enters the war on the side of the Germans and contributes forces to a naval bombardment of Russia.
29 October 1914

Turkish leader Kemal Pasha

1915

Second Battle of Ypres
Germany unleashes poison gas en masse for the first time – banned under the Hague Convention – claiming thousands of casualties. The Germans were surprised by the effectiveness of the new weapon and thus didn't fully exploit the situation.
21 April - 25 May 1915

The sinking of the Lusitania
RMS Lusitania, a ship carrying 139 American passengers, is sunk in the German U-boat Campaign, prompting furious protests from the US.
7 May 1915

RMS Lusitania

Churchill resigns
In response to the bloodshed at Gallipoli, Winston Churchill resigns as first lord of the admiralty. He returns to the army as a battalion commander.
May 1915

Germany limits submarines
In an effort to keep the USA out of the war, Kaiser Wilhelm suspends unrestricted submarine warfare.
18 September 1915

The LZ 18 Zeppelin, the largest one ever, caught fire in October 1913, before entering service

THE ZEPPELIN RAIDS

ENGLAND
DECEMBER 1914 - AUGUST 1918

Named after its German inventor Ferdinand von Zeppelin, the zeppelin was a balloon-like airship with a covered metal frame used by the German forces throughout the war. These 'blimps' were used for naval reconnaissance but were made infamous for their use in strategic bombing raids against England. Nicknamed 'baby-killers', these airships made 51 bombing raids, killing 557 people and injuring another 1,358, most of whom were civilians. Amassing a total of £1.5 million in damage, the Zeppelin raids finally came to a stop with the introduction of aeroplanes, which could shoot them down with relative ease.

Conditions in WWI trenches were squalid

THE BATTLE OF VERDUN

FRANCE
21 FEBRUARY - 18 DECEMBER 1916

In response to the increasing threat of German invasion, the French attempted to build an impassable line of sunken forts extending from the Swiss frontier to the French city of Verdun. The Battle of Verdun was a German campaign to 'bleed the French dry.' Germany was successful in claiming the French forts but quickly became distracted by the British attack on the Somme and the Russian offensive in the East, allowing France to reclaim the forts. Nine months later, with enormous casualties on both sides, neither force had gained a real strategic advantage.

THE BATTLE OF GALLIPOLI

SANJAK OF GELIBOLU

25 APRIL 1915 - 9 JANUARY 1916

After a Russian appeal for aid, the British launched an expedition to take the Gallipoli Peninsula, hoping that by doing so they would knock Turkey out of the war. The campaign was a fiasco, as the Turkish repelled the Allied forces from fortified high ground, amassing huge numbers of casualties on both sides – 252,000 Allied and 218,000 Ottoman. After months of fighting and no gains on either side, the British forces withdrew. This disastrous campaign badly tarnished Winston Churchill and Field Marshall Lord Kitchener's reputations.

The HMS Irresistible abandoned on 18 March 1915

THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME

FRANCE 1 JULY - 18 NOVEMBER 1916

Fought between the armies of Britain and France against the German Empire, this five-month battle took place on either side of the river Somme in Northern France. Originally planned as a battle of attrition, the German Verdun offensive prompted the date of the planned attack to be brought forward. Although the numbers were highly in their favour, the Allies failed to destroy the German barbed wire and concrete bunkers, transforming no man's land into a mess of mud and craters. As the infantry pushed forward, the Germans manned their machine guns and picked off the soldiers with ease. One of the bloodiest battles in history, the Battle of the Somme claimed the lives of over 420,000 British, 200,000 French and 500,000 German soldiers. Gaining the Allies just 12 kilometres (7.5 miles) of ground, Sir Douglas Haig's decisions during the battle are still a source of great controversy today.

The Battle of Jutland

Although the British suffer heavy losses, the German Navy is largely put out of operation for the remainder of the war after this battle.

31 May 1916

The HMS Birmingham sinking at Jutland

USA declares war

In response to the sinking of more US ships by the German U-boats, the United States join the fight against Germany.

6 April 1917

Captured U-boats in Trondheim, Norway

Battle of Cambrai

Utilising tank warfare, the British artillery penetrate the German Hindenburg Line. These tactics will play a large part in the fighting throughout 1918. **20 November - 7 December 1917**

The Battle of Cambrai

Hindenburg Line collapses

After a 56-hour long bombardment, the Allied forces break through the last line of German defences on the Western Front, the Hindenburg Line.

29 September 1918

Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates

Faced with a German revolution, Kaiser Wilhelm resigns as emperor of the German Empire and king of Prussia.

9 November 1918

Kaiser Wilhelm II

1916 1917 1918 1919

Wilson ultimately received the Nobel Peace Prize

Important telegraph

American President Woodrow Wilson is given the Zimmerman Telegraph by British intelligence. It urges Mexico to side with Germany, promising US territory in return.

Battle of Passchendaele

Acting against the wishes of British PM David Lloyd George, Douglas Haig leads an offensive to reach the Belgian coast. Heavy losses result on both sides.

31 July - 6 November 1917

A scene of carnage at Passchendaele

The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk

The Russians sign an armistice with Germany, ending their involvement in the war. The terms are harsh, with Russia surrendering Poland and Ukraine.

5 December 1917

Turkey makes peace

Known as the 'Armistice of Mudros', the hostilities in the Middle Eastern theatre come to an end as the Turks finally ask for an armistice.

30 October 1918

The Treaty of Versailles signed

Five years to the day after Ferdinand's assassination, the Treaty of Versailles is signed between the Allied powers and Germany.

28 June 1919

LLOYD GEORGE BECOMES PRIME MINISTER

GREAT BRITAIN 7 DECEMBER 1916

After becoming critical of Prime Minister Asquith after repeated military failures in the war, and with the support of the conservative and labour leaders, Lloyd George became the Liberal wartime prime minister. His concentrated wartime cabinet meet every day, increasing the pace of action during the war. Lloyd George was highly untrusting of his war secretary, Douglas Haig, who he accused of needlessly sacrificing lives. He agreed to the instatement of French Marshall Ferdinand Foch as supreme commander of all Allied forces, which he hoped would limit Haig's power. Lloyd George's determination to achieve unity of military control among the Allies is regarded to have had a great influence over their victory.

David Lloyd George became Britain's prime minister during WWI

RAF FORMED

GREAT BRITAIN

1 APRIL 1918

Comprised of the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service, the RAF was formed to combine the strengths of both organisations. The RAF were involved in major offensives on the Western Front. Now the world's oldest independent air force, the RAF served a vital part of military operations throughout WWII and up to the modern day.

ARMISTICE OF COMPIÈGNE

FRANCE

11 NOVEMBER 1918

Finally putting a stop to the fighting in Western Europe, this agreement ended the First World War. Now celebrated as Armistice Day, the cease-fire commenced on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. The terms of the armistice were mainly written by the French Marshal Ferdinand Foch and included the withdrawal of German troops and exchange of prisoners.

Foch (second from right), and others at Compiègne

LIFE AND DEATH OF THE MAD MONK

Discover how Rasputin gained the trust of the Russian royal family, only for his life to end under the most brutal circumstances

Written by Frances White

For a great deal of time in Russia it was believed that the name Rasputin meant 'licentious', and it was this image of the man that became the most prevalent. Rasputin was an accused sexual deviant, a rapist, and 'Mad Monk' who played the Russian royals like keys on a piano and whispered dark urges into the tsarina's ear. Rasputin, however, does not mean licentious at all. Its meaning is closer to, 'Where two rivers meet', referring to the place where he was born.

Just like his name, the true Rasputin, the man who lived and breathed, has been lost to history and replaced with caricatures; an old man with a long scraggly beard, terrible teeth and even more terrible deeds – but also a doting father, a respected holy man and a lover of beauty. It is this duality that has confounded and caused debates to this day. Was he indeed the man who brought a Russian dynasty to its knees, or has history created a scapegoat out of a man who only ever acted with good intentions?

The village of Pokrovskoye was small even by Siberian standards. With only 200 dwellings and no more than a thousand residents, it was an incredibly isolated start for the man whom every citizen of Russia would come to know, fear and loathe. But it was in this quiet, sleepy peasant village that Grigory Rasputin was born. The fifth of nine children, from a very early age Rasputin did not fit in. He did not attend school, for there was no school for him to attend, and he soon fell into a life of debauchery and drunkenness. He found the backbreaking labour of peasant work boring and empty, and he stole horses, fences – anything to add colour to his dull existence.

Rasputin did not live a life of crime due to incompetence, but instead because of a feeling that his life was lacking something. He had a wife, he even had children, but he still felt a gaping emptiness. Now in his twenties, he found himself – either through divine providence or banishment – at the newly expanded Verkhoturye Monastery. It was there that he met Starets Makary, an elder who lived a humble existence in the woods near the monastery. Rasputin's interactions with this holy man slowly transformed the rebel youth into a deeply spiritual individual. Rasputin gave up alcohol, tobacco and meat. When he returned to Pokrovskoye the rebellious criminal had become a fervent religious convert.

Rasputin had been inspired by Makary but not by the monastery. Throughout his whole life, Rasputin had never been one to sit idly, and he was definitely not accustomed to bowing to authority and blindly following orders, so it is not surprising he was repulsed by a life of servitude in a cold stone building. Rasputin did not believe he belonged in small places, or behind locked doors. His ever-wandering heart wished to explore the vastness of the Earth, and that's exactly what he set about doing.

Rasputin packed few belongings, wished his family goodbye and began the life of a strannik, or mystic wanderer. We do not know the extent or length of Rasputin's various pilgrimages in this stage of his life, but it is possible that he travelled as far as Mount Athos, the centre of the Orthodox Church. Sometimes he did not come back home for years, and his own wife and children struggled to recognise the man that returned. However, even in this life of a strannik Rasputin began to carve his own path.

During these years of wandering Rasputin encountered many different kinds of people from all branches of the Russian social order. Many have commented in memoirs and elsewhere that what Rasputin possessed was a very unique magnetism. He had a talent for understanding people quickly, he knew exactly what to say to them and he was unlike any priest or holy man they had encountered. This is because it was the truth – Rasputin was different, he had not confined himself to books and monasteries, but to the real world, and real people. When he spoke about God it was with a meaning that normal people could understand and his own beliefs were strengthened not simply with study, but with vivid, electric and very real experiences.

This 'magnetism' began to draw people to Rasputin's home. Villagers and pilgrims further afield travelled to sit, talk, pray and seek council from the man. He soon amassed a loyal group of followers. However, Rasputin also attracted negative attention. Rumours quickly spread that he was often seen with young women, that his followers would bathe him, and that he was teaching them mysterious rituals.

Rasputin was especially despised by the resident priest of Pokrovskoye, who likely didn't relish the idea of an upstart peasant gaining such popularity over himself and his own teachings.

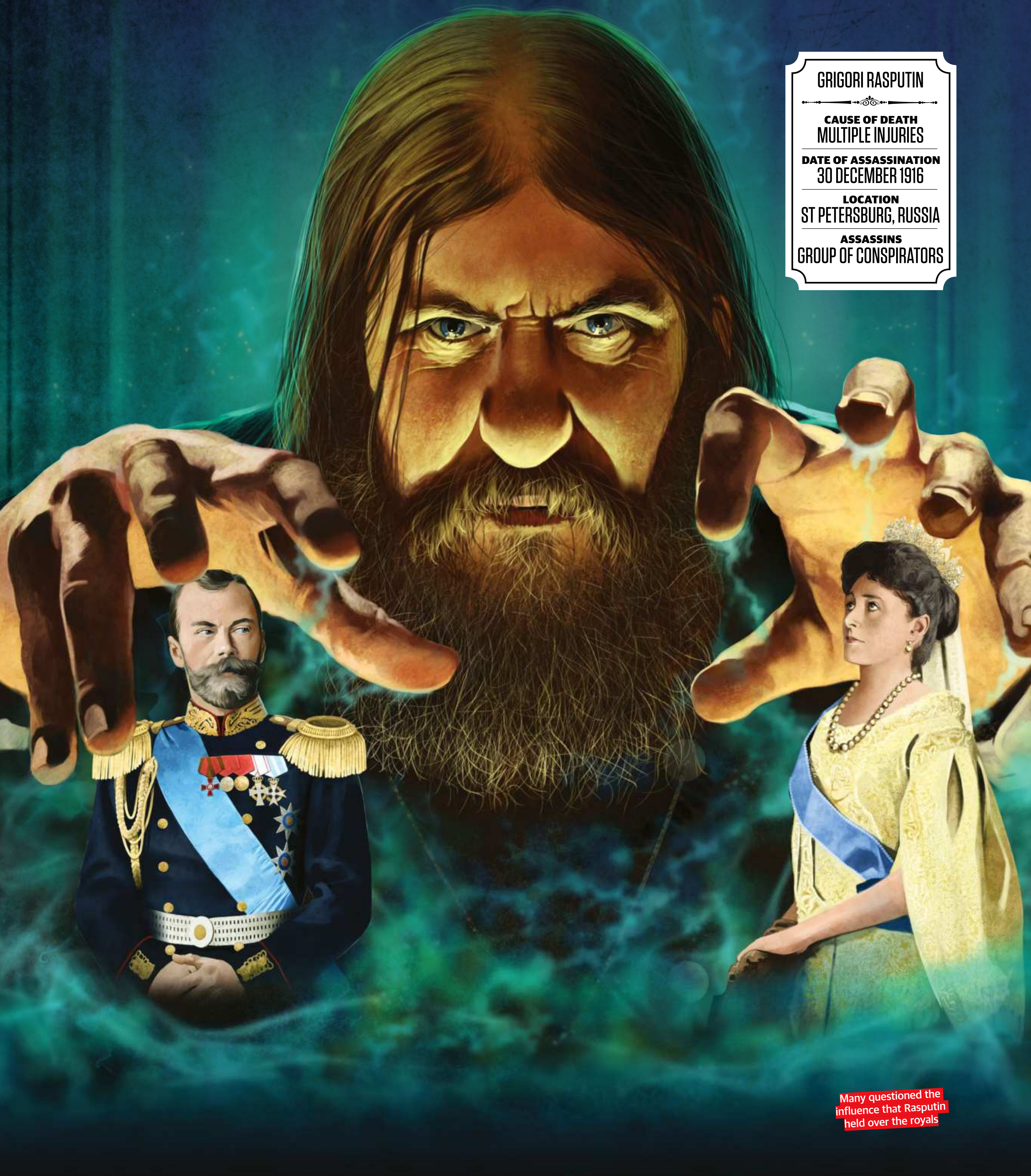
GRIGORI RASPUTIN

CAUSE OF DEATH
MULTIPLE INJURIES

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
30 DECEMBER 1916

LOCATION
ST PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

ASSASSINS
GROUP OF CONSPIRATORS



Many questioned the influence that Rasputin held over the royals

FAITH OR FAKE?

Alexandra believed Rasputin cured her son with faith-healing, but it's one of many explanations

THE WRONG DRUGS

Aspirin was in use at the time and it is likely it was administered to the heir to help reduce his pain. Rasputin may have rejected the use of this drug, and by doing so he unintentionally helped the boy, as aspirin thins the blood and would have worsened Alexei's condition.

CALMING PRESENCE

As a holy man it is not out of the question to assume that Rasputin brought a calm, tranquil air to both Alexandra and her son. This reduced stress may have helped the bleeding to gradually slow and stop.

DRUGGING

A popular theory at the time was that Rasputin was drugging Alexei with Tibetan herbs. This theory was fuelled by the disconnect people felt towards the imperial family.

GOOD TIMING

Others believed Rasputin to be less occult and more cunning. It was argued that he had a confidant at the court, a lady-in-waiting, who fed him information about Alexei, and when the boy was on the mend the healer made an appearance to claim the credit.

HYPNOSIS

The court physician at the time, Botkin, fiercely disliked Rasputin and claimed he had used hypnosis on the child, whispering words into his ear and inducing the bleeding to stop.

A post-mortem photograph of Rasputin – a bullet wound can clearly be seen in his forehead

People from all walks of life seemed to be drawn to Rasputin; he is seen here surrounded by admirers

Due to all this attention, Rasputin's meetings were abandoned and the priest probably thought that was the end of it.

When Rasputin announced his intentions to travel to St Petersburg, he was warned by a fellow holy man that "the city will ruin you", but he ignored the warning; he had set his heart on a single mission, and nobody could dissuade him. He bore a letter of recommendation that granted him access to Bishop Sergei, the rector of the St Petersburg Seminary. Through association with Sergei, Rasputin became known to the curious elite of St Petersburg and the counts and countesses were fascinated by the bedraggled travelling man with his soft, strong words and strange allure.

Before long, the aristocracy were introducing him to their friends and the name Rasputin became known to anyone who was anyone in the capital. After befriending Princess Milica of Montenegro and her sister, Rasputin was then introduced by them to the two most powerful figures in the whole of Russia – the tsar and the tsarina.

Rasputin's arrival to the lives of the imperial family could not have been better timed if he had planned it himself. Russia was in a state of disarray; the imperial family were facing a brutal backlash and there was a very real chance of them losing their grip on the country entirely. Rasputin sat and listened to Alexandra's worries and they spoke at length about religion. The holy man calmly told her that her husband needed to be closer to his people, and that she could trust his words. Alexandra immediately became close to Rasputin, as she too had a strong belief in the strength of the dynasty, and believed that he had been sent by God to secure the strength of their royal line.

> "The outsider was a curiosity… and almost a party piece"

Alexandra's trust in Rasputin meant that when her son, Alexei, suffered from one of his haemophilic bleeding episodes, she summoned him immediately. Alexandra was well aware of the seriousness of his condition; she had lost an uncle and brother to the same hereditary disease, and it is likely she knew that it would claim her son, too. Alexei became a symbol of the future of Russian royalty – to save him was also to save tsardom. Alexandra had spoken to many doctors and tried multiple cures for her son's disease but nothing had worked, and so in her moment of need, with her child dangerously close to death, she called upon the mystic holy man.

Rasputin came to the palace, began to pray by the boy's bed and amazingly, seemed to be able to calm the child, his condition rapidly improving. In another incident Alexei sustained an injury and lay suffering and moaning for days. Alexandra, remembering how Rasputin had managed to ease her child previously, sent a telegram to the man. Rasputin responded to her worries: "The little one will not die. Do not allow the doctors to bother him too much." Just as he said, the boy's health went on to improve and Alexandra was convinced Rasputin was responsible for his recovery.

Although Rasputin's role was primarily as a healer to Alexei, he became a close confidant of the family, even occasionally serving as adviser to the tsar himself. However, Rasputin's easy access and apparent influence over the household did not go unnoticed. Living in an apartment on Gorokhovaya street, Rasputin was frequently visited by peasants seeking assistance, but even more so by the aristocracy, many of whom planned to use him to gain their own favour at court.

There were others, however, who were less than fond of the strange peasant. Rumours concerning Rasputin began to resurge. Some of Rasputin's enemies went to Nicholas and Alexandra directly to warn them of his influence, but both were quick to dismiss them. When Nicholas was urged to exile him to Tobolsk he commented, "I know Rasputin too well to believe all the tittle-tattle about him." One of the most damning accusations against Rasputin was that he was a member of the Khlysty, an underground sect split off from the Orthodox Church. The fact that he was a good dancer, and the sect was known for their dances and possible sexual promiscuity, seemed to add fuel to the accusation. Many different figures in the Orthodox Church leapt on this, accusing Rasputin of numerous immoral practises.

Against such a torrent of abuse, Nicholas had no choice but to investigate the holy man. However, after two months with nothing uncovered, the investigation ended. Anyone who criticised Rasputin was condemned by a royal family pushed to the brink. Politicians who spoke out against him found themselves relieved of their positions, and more willing, obedient men were put in their place.

If Nicholas wasn't willing to condemn Rasputin with the rest of them, then the two of them would burn together. By associating and supporting a man who was regarded by many as an evil force, Nicholas did little to bolster his own reputation.

Rasputin's entire demeanour was said to have changed immensely after an assassination attempt in 1914, and it's possible that the experience made him a little warier of trusting people. Whether he thought he was doing the right thing or not, Rasputin had made some very dangerous enemies. With the tsarina refusing to acknowledge that he was a bad influence, the nobles decided to take matters into their own hands. A group of conspirators tricked Rasputin into meeting with them under the pretence of meeting the tsar's niece. Rasputin entered the Yusupov Palace on the night of 17 December 1916 and was not seen alive again. His disappearance was noted immediately the next morning, and a search began. His body was finally discovered, frozen solid beside the riverbank of the Malaya Nevka River.

When the conspirators planned Rasputin's murder, their goal was likely to eliminate the powerful influence over the monarchy. However, the monarchy could not be saved, not even by destroying Rasputin. Russia was already hurtling off the cliff by the time he was murdered, and it was far too late to save it. In December 1916, Rasputin wrote a letter to the tsar about a peculiar prophecy, that if he was killed by the tsar's relations then "none of your children will remain alive for more than two years." He also predicted the tsar's death, and claimed that the country would plummet into plague and poverty, and "the Russian land will die."

The many lives of Rasputin

As his conspirators discovered, Rasputin was a very difficult man to kill

① STABBING

A former prostitute stabbed Rasputin in the gut so violently that his entrails fell from his stomach. She also screamed, "I've killed the antichrist!" However, he survived after surgery.

② POISON

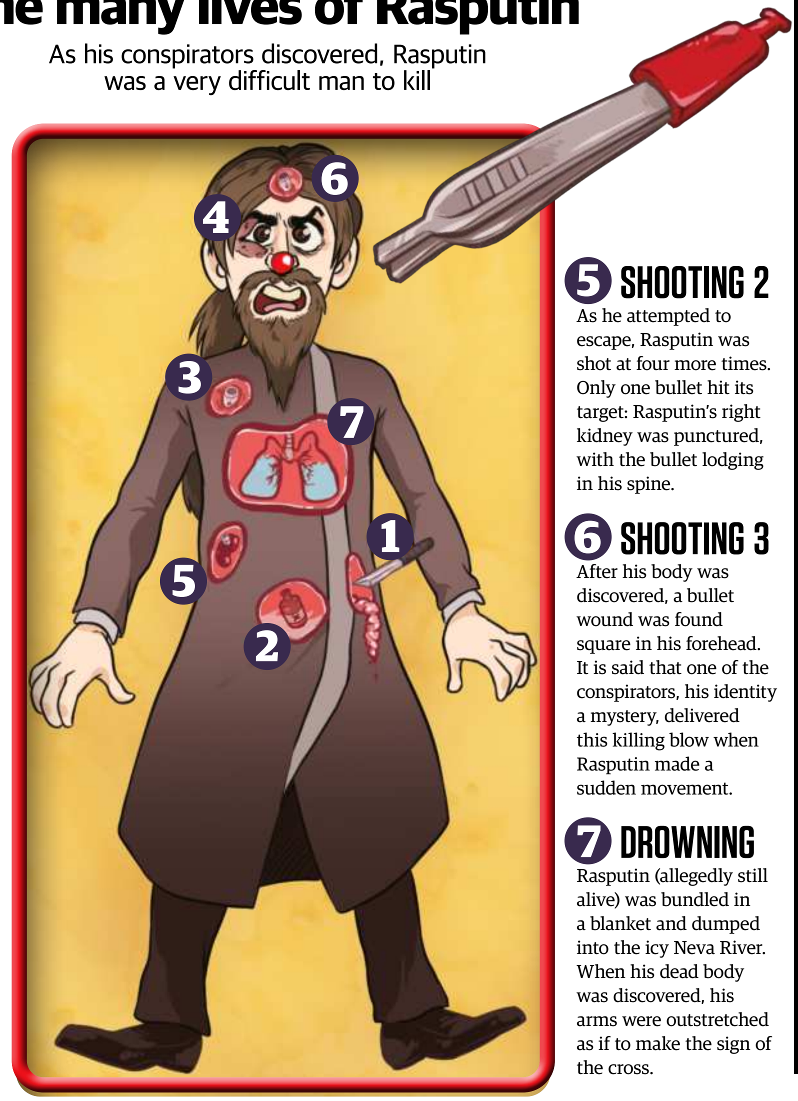
Fuelled by the country's hate, a group of conspirators lured Rasputin to their home and encouraged him to dine on wine and cyanide-laced cakes. Despite consuming enough poison to kill several men, he was nevertheless unaffected.

③ SHOOTING 1

After Rasputin failed to be affected by the poison, one of the conspirators rushed upstairs then returned with a revolver. Rasputin was shot through the chest. The bullet went clean through his body, but he still wasn't dead.

④ BEATING

After falling to the floor having been shot, Rasputin tried to escape through the yard. The conspirators chased after him and beat him with a rubber club when they caught up.



⑤ SHOOTING 2

As he attempted to escape, Rasputin was shot at four more times. Only one bullet hit its target: Rasputin's right kidney was punctured, with the bullet lodging in his spine.

⑥ SHOOTING 3

After his body was discovered, a bullet wound was found square in his forehead. It is said that one of the conspirators, his identity a mystery, delivered this killing blow when Rasputin made a sudden movement.

⑦ DROWNING

Rasputin (allegedly still alive) was bundled in a blanket and dumped into the icy Neva River. When his dead body was discovered, his arms were outstretched as if to make the sign of the cross.

THE MEN WHO KILLED RASPUTIN

Pushed to the edge of desperation, these men formed a conspiracy to end Rasputin

FELIX YUSUPOV

Coming from an extremely wealthy family - richer than the Romanovs - Felix was the oldest surviving male heir to the huge fortune. Although he was clever and quick-witted, he faced criticism for avoiding service during World War I. As the husband of Alexander Romanov's niece, Princess Irina of Russia, he disliked the influence that Rasputin held over the family, and became a key player in the plot to bring about his downfall.

GRAND DUKE DMITRI PAVLOVICH

Dmitri was grandson of Alexander II of Russia and after his primary carer, his uncle, was killed by a revolutionary attack, he went to live with the Romanovs. He was known to be something of a playboy and these actions likely ruined plans for him to marry the eldest Romanov daughter, Olga. In his later life he moved to Paris and had an affair with Coco Chanel.

VLADIMIR MITROFANOVICH PURISHKEVICH

Born in Bessarabia, a region in Eastern Europe, Purishkevich followed his strong right-wing leanings and founded the Union of Russian People, a counter-revolutionary group. He was then elected to the Russian Duma, but he was a disruptive presence. Behind the scenes he was working on a plan to rid the country of Rasputin's influence for good.

STANISLAUS DE LAZOVERT

Originally born in Poland, Lazovert moved to Russia and crossed paths with Purishkevich during World War I. Trained as a doctor, it was Lazovert who was given the task of lacing the cakes with poison - potassium cyanide to be exact. Claiming to have used a dose large enough to kill several men, Rasputin somehow survived. It has since been argued that Lazovert's will failed him and he in fact couldn't poison the cakes.

SERGEI MIKHAILOVICH SUKHOTIN

A lieutenant in the Preobrazhensky Regiment, one of the oldest elite regiments of the Imperial Russian Army, it is believed that Sukhotin was an old friend of Felix's but was injured near the beginning of the war. Little is known about Sukhotin beyond this, but it is likely he had some familiarity with the men to become embroiled in the plot.

MURDER IN THE HOUSE OF ROMANOV

Shot and stabbed by drunken revolutionaries, the murder of the Russian royal family still reverberates today

Written by Will Lawrence

When they awoke on the morning of Tuesday 16 July 1918, it was just another day in captivity for the Romanovs. The former tsar of Russia, Nicholas Alexandrovich Romanov, his wife Alexandra and their five children had spent the last 16 months in captivity. Following the February Revolution, Nicholas II had abdicated in March 1917, bringing to an end over 300 years of Romanov rule over the Russian empire.

To begin with, the family was held under arrest at Tsarskoe Selo, enjoying a life of relative luxury. Some say that Nicholas, never a confident or comfortable ruler, had never been happier, revelling in the trappings of rule without the responsibilities. In late April 1918, however, the family were transferred to the bleak Urals and settled in the town of Yekaterinburg.

It was there, at Ipatiev House, that the Romanovs' lives became monotonous. Their Bolshevik captors deprived them of the luxuries to which they were accustomed and treated them with increasing disdain.

The tsar's four daughters, Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia, were harassed; graffiti appeared on the walls making lewd suggestions about Alexandra and her murdered favourite, the peasant holy man Rasputin. Still, the family lived in hope. The arrival in early July of Yakov Yurovsky had brought the Romanovs some relief. A close friend of Lenin's, Yurovsky introduced more disciplined guards to the house who treated Nicholas's daughters with respect.

Alexandra, meanwhile, was boosted by an upturn in her son's constitution; Alexei, the couple's youngest child, was afflicted by haemophilia and had often suffered ill health. When she went to bed at about 10.30pm on 16 July, Alexandra penned a positive note in her dairy. It was cool, she wrote, about 15 degrees. Maybe the family's ordeal, suffering amid the heat and tedium of Yekaterinburg, would soon abate.

A few hours later, she was woken from her slumber. Yurovsky, it transpired, was not a harbinger of hope. He roused the family and their servants at about midnight, reporting that the anti-Bolshevik White Army was approaching and that the family might be in danger from heavy shelling. They were urged to dress as quickly

> **"As the gun smoke cleared, groans from the blood-spattered floor testified to a bungled execution"**

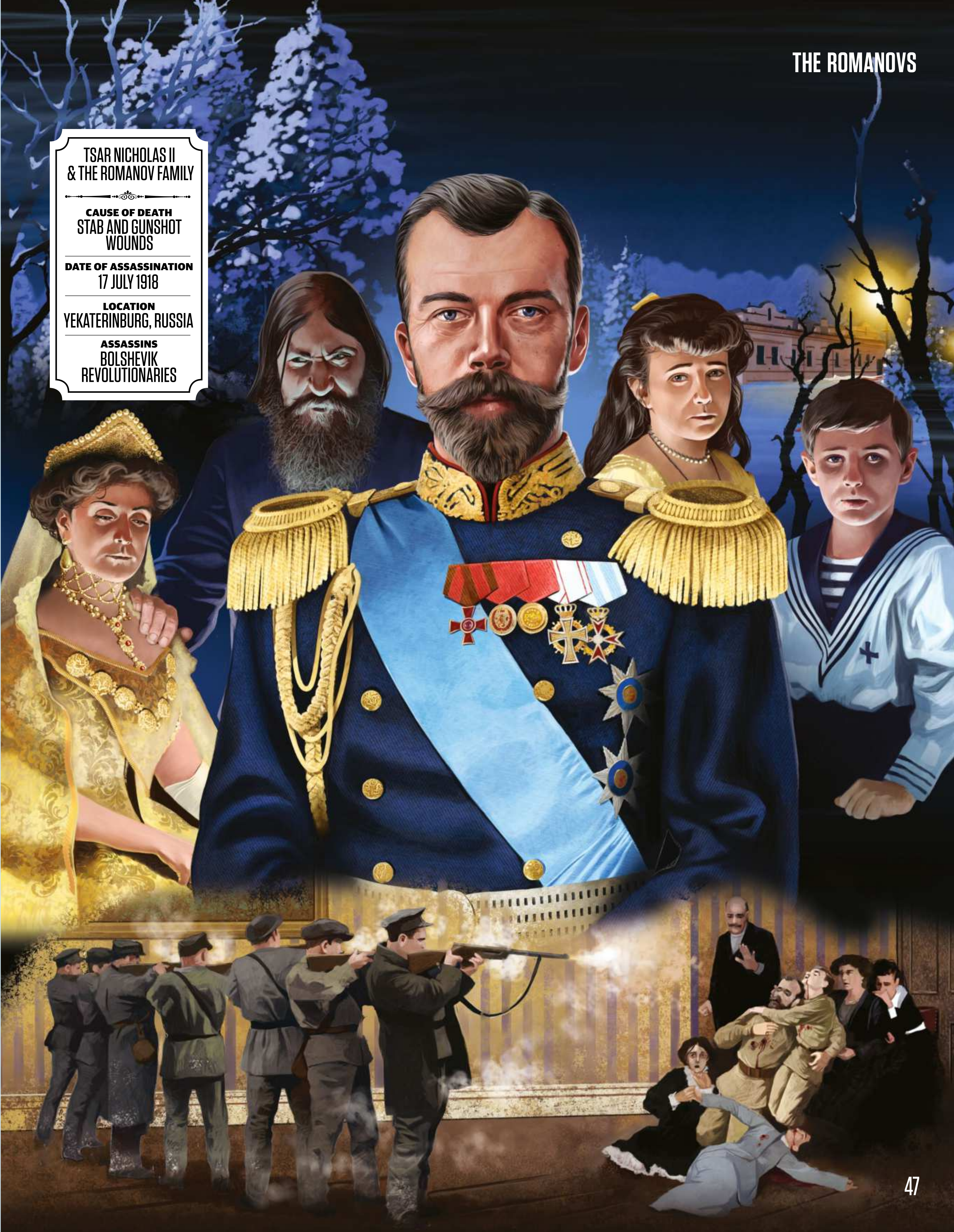
TSAR NICHOLAS II & THE ROMANOV FAMILY

CAUSE OF DEATH
STAB AND GUNSHOT WOUNDS

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
17 JULY 1918

LOCATION
YEKATERINBURG, RUSSIA

ASSASSINS
BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTIONARIES



as possible. The Romanov women wrapped themselves up in clothes sewn full of precious stones, hoping, perhaps, that this night might yet end in liberation.

At 2.15am on 17 July, the seven Romanovs along with their doctor, Eugene Botkin, and three other servants – the valet, a maid and the cook – hurried into the cool night air. Yurovsky led them from the main house across a courtyard to a small basement room at the far corner of the house.

According to one source, Nicholas was heard to say to his daughters reassuringly: "Well, we're going to get out of this place." Some believe he was simply acting as a comforting father, knowing full well the fate that lay ahead. Others believe he was speaking what he perceived as the truth. After all, if the approaching White Army were to take the town, perhaps they could be returned to more favourable circumstances. There were some monarchists among the White ranks.

The room into which the Romanovs were ushered was a tight space, less than 13 square-feet, with iron bars covering the one window. There was no furniture. A single bulb hanging overhead cast a weak light. "What, no chairs?" asked Alexandra. "May we not sit?"

Two chairs were brought in and Alexandra and Alexei sat down. Yurovsky told the 11 captives that he needed a photograph of the group to send to Moscow, where there were concerns that the family might have escaped. He set them up in two rows, Nicholas standing front and centre with his son seated next to him. Alexandra sat in her chair close to the wall and her daughters gathered around her. The servants, meanwhile, lined up behind Nicholas and Alexei.

The family was then left in peace for 30 minutes as they awaited the photographer. When Yurovsky returned, however, he brought not a camera and tripod, but a firing squad. There were six Hungarians and five Russians. As the men crowded into the room and confusion ran across the faces of the family, Yurovsky stood in the front of Nicholas holding a small piece of paper from which he read their death sentence.

"Nikolai Alexandrovich, in view of the fact that your relatives are continuing their attack on Soviet Russia, the Ural Executive Committee has decided to execute you." Nicholas's jaw dropped. He couldn't believe what he was hearing. "What?" he said to Yurovsky. "What?"

Yurovsky repeated the statement and pulled a pistol from his pocket. He shot Nicholas at point-blank range. The former tsar crumpled to the floor. The firing squad then opened fire. Each man had been assigned a target but, in the constrained space, and with plenty of vodka running through the shooters' veins, a melee ensued.

The men shot poorly. Alexandra and her eldest daughter Olga each tried to make the sign of the cross but they did not have time. Alexandra took a bullet in the left side of her skull and died immediately. The doctor and two of the servants also died swiftly.

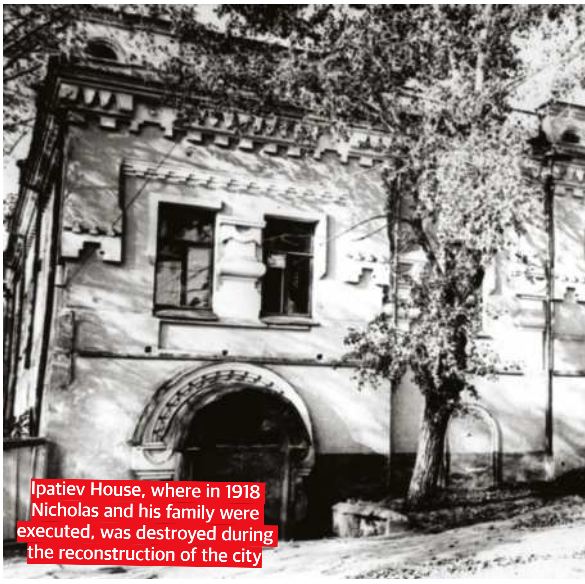
As the gun smoke cleared, groans from the blood-spattered floor testified to a bungled execution. It was the tsar's children who suffered most horribly. They had not died quickly. Some of the executioners had been temporarily deafened by the gunfire and their clothing streaked with powder burns from where their comrades had shot over their shoulders.

Alexei, at least three of the daughters and the maid all remained alive. Their clothes stuffed with jewels had, apparently, acted like makeshift bulletproof vests. According to the scholar Robert Massie, "barely visible through the smoke, Maria and Anastasia pressed against the wall, squatting, covering their heads with their arms until bullets cut them down."

Another scholar, Helen Rappaport, writing more recently, contends that the sisters were finished off with bayonets, Olga having been shot in the jaw, and Tatiana in the back of the head as she tried to escape. The last of the women to die, she says, was Anastasia, stabbed in the chest by a drunken guard before Yurovsky finished the job with his pistol.

13-year-old Alexei, it seems, was the last family member to die. Lying on the floor, says Massie, he raised his arm to shield himself before clutching at his father's shirt. "One of the executioners kicked the tsarevich in the head with his heavy boot," Massie writes. "Alexei moaned. Yurovsky stepped up and fired two shots into the boy's ear."

While many details of the event are debated, what scholars do agree upon is that what was initially planned as a quick and clean execution played out as a grim slaughter. They also agree on the time frame. It took 20 minutes for the Bolsheviks to murder the royal family and toss their mangled bodies into a truck.



Ipatiev House, where in 1918 Nicholas and his family were executed, was destroyed during the reconstruction of the city

The road to revolution

Nicholas II accedes to the throne after the death of his father, Alexander III, who was a far more open-minded and able monarch than his son will prove to be.
November 1894

The Russo-Japanese War erupts. The results will be devastating for Russia, Nicholas's signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth ceding power in East Asia.
February 1904

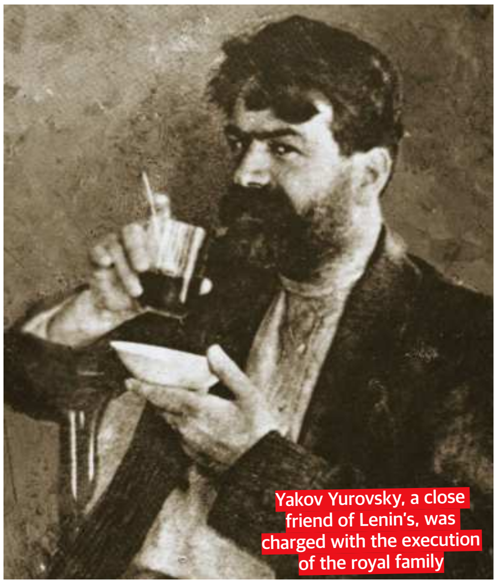
Revolution breaks out across the Russian empire amid a wave of political and social unrest. Workers go on strike and military units mutiny.
January 1905

Bloody Sunday unfolds as the Imperial Guard fires upon unarmed demonstrators, who are attempting to present a petition to the tsar at the Winter Palace.
January 1905

The October Manifesto sees Nicholas guarantee civil liberties to all Russian citizens. By signing, he creates the duma, an elected legislature.
October 1905

The peasant holy man Grigori Rasputin arrives at court. His influence there alienates many, especially after the outbreak of World War I in 1914.
November 1905

Tsar Nicholas in captivity at Tsarskoe Selo



Yakov Yurovsky, a close friend of Lenin's, was charged with the execution of the royal family

"It took 20 minutes for the Bolsheviks to murder the royal family and toss their mangled bodies into a truck"

"Given all the evidence that has come to light," writes the historian Orlando Figes, "it is inconceivable that any of the Romanovs survived this ordeal." The only certain survivor, he says, was Alexei's pet spaniel, Joy.

The official announcement appeared two days later on 19 July, an editorial in the newspaper of record, *Izvestia*, claiming that Nicholas had been executed and the family sent to a safe place. News of the murder, they believed, could incite public sympathy. The truth remained largely unknown until the publication in 1924 of a book by Nikolai Sokolov, which revealed much of the horror.

Even when evidence for the death of the entire family began to leak, legends sprung up that perhaps some had survived. The legend still lives today, notes Figes, "which merely goes to show that there is more currency - and more profit - in fiction than in history."

The murder of the Romanovs has emerged as a story of huge significance in the history of the Russian Revolution, even though, at the time, news of the tsar's death and rumours about the fate of his family elicited little response from the populace. Many historians, meanwhile, regarded the execution as little more than a footnote in a much larger story. After all, the revolution claimed millions of lives. Why should the death of this one family deserve particular attention?

The answer, says Figes, lies in the fact that these murders were "a declaration of the Terror. It was a statement that from now on individuals would count for nothing in the civil war." He points to the words of the Red Army founder Leon Trotsky: "We must put an end once and for all to the papist-Quaker babble about the sanctity of human life." As the Russian Revolution unfolded, it showed little consideration for human life.

The Russian Revolution is, in fact, a collective name for two separate revolutions, the first coming in February 1917 and sparking the dismantling of the tsarist autocracy and the founding of a new Provisional Government. The second came in October of the same year when the Bolsheviks overthrew the Provisional Government and stirred a civil war against the anti-socialist White Army. Some scholars put the number of deaths in this conflict in the region of 12 million. The terror wrought by the Bolshevik state security service, the Cheka, meanwhile, accounted for thousands more.

It began with the February Revolution of 1917, which erupted upon the streets of the Russian capital city Petrograd (formerly St Petersburg), as food shortages took hold. On 22 February, thousands of metal and textile workers took to the streets. By 27 February, more than 200,000 workers went on strike, marching in the streets and hurling missiles at the police.

This torrent became a flood, and by the start of March, 170,000 soldiers were mingling with the insurgents and clamouring for change. The revolution was in full swing. The members of the Duma, the elected legislature, then established a temporary government having already persuaded the army generals that the tsar must abdicate. He duly obliged. Two forces brought about his downfall: the mass mobilisation of the workers and soldiers, and the political machinations of a middle-class parliamentary opposition.

"The collapse of the autocracy," says historian Steve Smith, "was rooted in a crisis of modernisation." During the latter half of the 19th century, the Russian state worked tirelessly to keep up with the military and economic development of the western powers. "The government hoped that it could carry out modernisation while maintaining tight control over society," writes Smith. "Yet the effect of industrialisation, urbanisation, internal migration and the emergence of new social classes was to set in train forces that served to erode the foundations of the autocratic state."

This erosion was concentrated in the emergence of an industrial proletariat "snatched from the plough and hurled into the factory furnace," in

- As unrest abates, Prime Minister Stolypin launches a coup against the duma, limiting its power and reducing peasant representation. **June 1907**
- Social Democrats split into two camps, the relatively moderate Mensheviks and the more radical Bolsheviks. **January 1912**
- World War I breaks out and Russia, entering the war in support of Serbia, suffers a string of demoralising defeats. **July 1914**
- Nicholas takes personal command of the armed forces, a task for which he is ill suited. Inflation rises and food shortages ensue. **November 1915**
- Workers and soldiers in Petrograd take to the streets and the duma establishes the Provisional Government. **February 1917**
- Nicholas abdicates the throne in favour of his brother, Michael. Aware it is a poisoned chalice, Michael renounces his claim the next day. **March 1917**
- Vladimir Ilyich Lenin leads the Bolshevik coup, which topples the Provisional Government and leads to the outbreak of civil war. **October 1917**

> **“When evidence for the death of the entire family began to leak, legends sprung up that perhaps some had survived”**

Trotsky’s famous words. Concentrated in large numbers for the first time, they emerged as a collective with considerable political clout. As Smith points out, the workers’ new urban lives offered them education and cultural diversity while also exposing them to the “subversive political ideas of Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries. The wretched conditions in which workers lived, the drudgery of their work and their pitiful wages heightened their sense of separateness not only from the government but from privileged society in general.”

In addition, a new social group had emerged during the 19th century, defined less by its socioeconomic position than by its attitude towards imperial power. This ‘intelligentsia’ filtered through different strata of Russian society as time went on, seeping into the new middle classes, and even the upper classes as the aristocrats became more commercially aware.

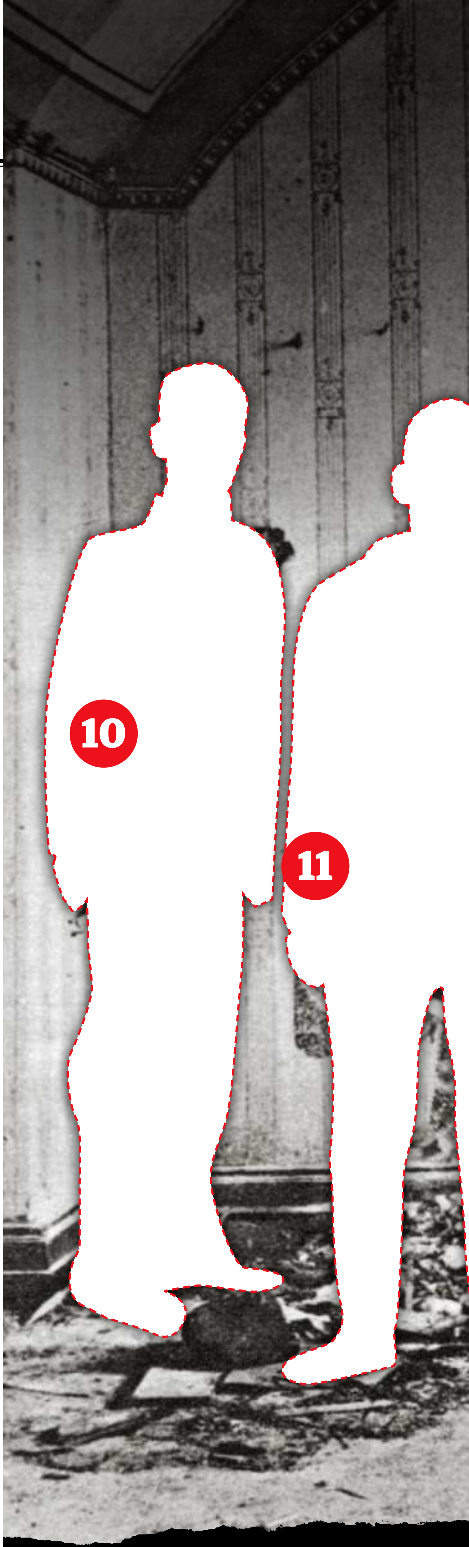
These social groups united to ignite the flames of revolution that burned during the 1905 uprising. This the tsar survived, having in the October Manifesto agreed to the formation of an elected legislature and the concession of many civil rights. Though autocratic power was weakened, it was not necessarily doomed.

It took the outbreak of World War I to finally bring down the tsar. The first year of conflict proved disastrous for Russia, and in November 1915, Nicholas took command of the armed forces. This was a misguided decision. Hundreds of thousands died in the trenches. “Throughout his reign,” writes Orlando Figes, “Nicholas gave the impression of being unable to cope with the task of ruling a vast empire in the grips of a deepening revolutionary crisis.” He certainly could not cope with commanding the armed forces, a task for which he was poorly qualified. Alexandra, meanwhile, interfered in governmental business on the home front while her relationship with her favourite, Rasputin, caused outrage among common folk and officials alike. Stories of sexual relations between the peasant and the tsarina, though unfounded, were rife. Nicholas, meanwhile, was forced to raise taxes to pay for the war. Foreign debt increased, as did inflation. When food shortages set in, the populace could take no more. The tsar’s days were numbered. Indeed, Figes points to a popular Russian joke that says the tsar himself should have been awarded the Order of the Red Banner for services to the revolution.

Once Nicholas abdicated and the Bolsheviks under Lenin took control of the country later in the year, they pledged to put ‘Bloody Nicholas’ on trial. Yet both he and his family were murdered. Was this because the Bolsheviks were worried that the White Army would take Yekaterinburg, liberate Nicholas and use him as a totem? As Figes notes, it is highly unlikely that the Whites would want such an unpopular and discredited figure as their ‘live banner’. Rather, he says, it was the idea of a trial that became problematic.

To put Nicholas in the dock, Figes says, was to presuppose the possibility of his innocence. “And in that case, the moral legitimacy of the revolution would itself be open to question. Nicholas had to die so that Soviet power could live.”

Duma messengers protected by armed guards during the Russian Revolution, 1917



01

Nicholas Alexandrovich Romanov

AGE AT DEATH: 50

The last tsar of Russia oversaw a disastrous war with Japan and the establishment of the duma. He took command of the army during 1915 and was asked to abdicate two years later.

02

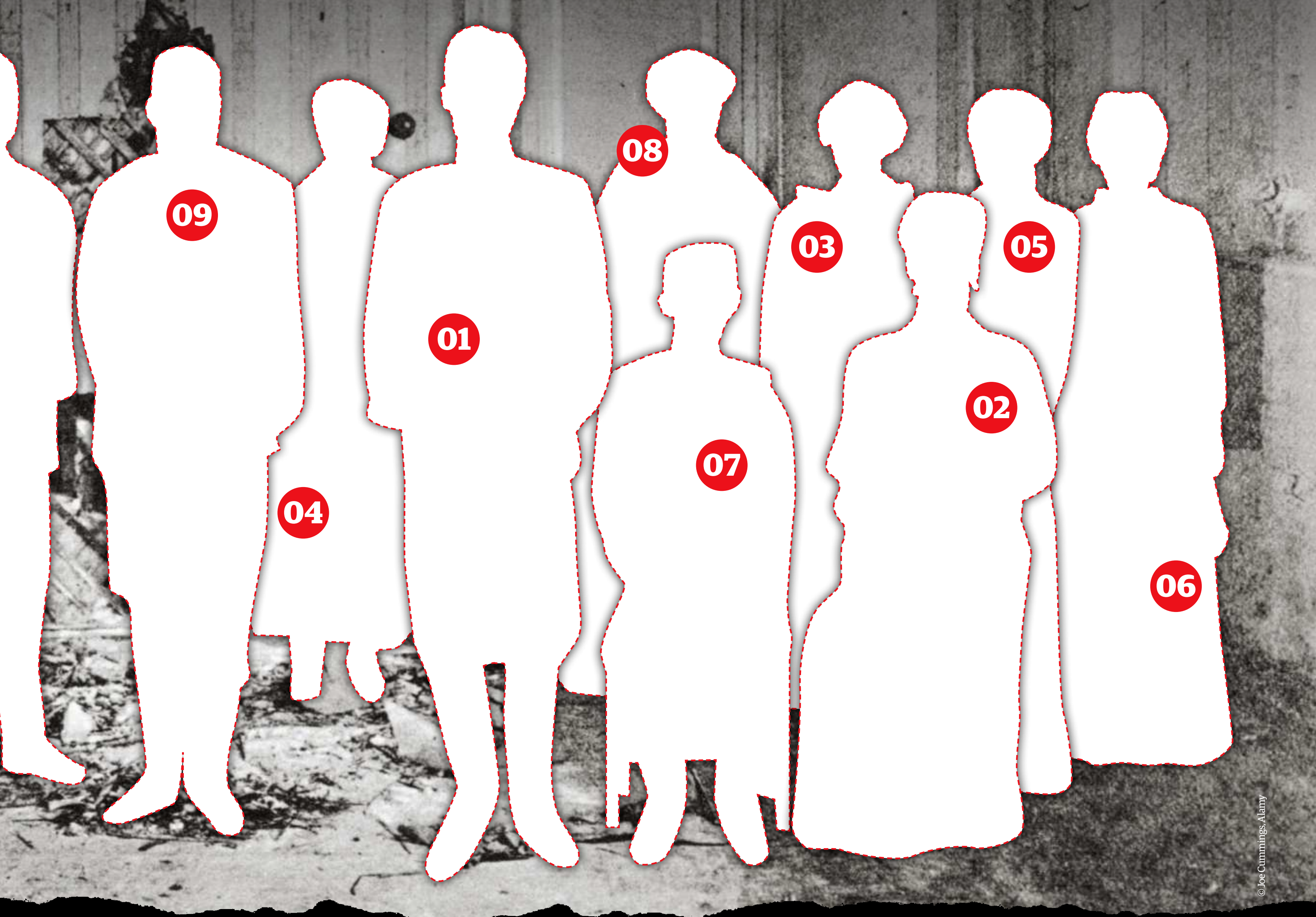
Alexandra Feodorovna

AGE AT DEATH: 46

A pious and spiritual woman, Alexandra was a devoted mother. She fell under the influence of Rasputin and meddled in governmental policy during WWI.

The Massacre

Posed for a family photograph, the Romanovs were slaughtered instead



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03

Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna

AGE AT DEATH: 22

As a youngster, Olga was devoted to her father but often quarrelled with her mother. She was said to be a generous and charitable woman.

04

Grand Duchess Tatiana Nikolaevna

AGE AT DEATH: 21

Tatiana was said to be practical with a knack for leadership, her sisters calling her the 'The Governess'.

05

Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna

AGE AT DEATH: 19

Maria was not as lively as her three sisters, and though usually sweet natured, she could also be stubborn and lazy.

06

Grand Duchess Anastasia Nikolaevna

AGE AT DEATH: 17

The youngest daughter was energetic though sometimes in poor health. She had a close relationship with Rasputin.

07

Tsarevich Alexei Nikolaevich

AGE AT DEATH: 13

Alexei's haemophilia was severe and it was the tsarina's bid to help him that allowed Rasputin into the family fold.

08

Anna Demidova

AGE AT DEATH: 40

Demidova travelled with the tsarina as her maid when the family went into captivity. The executioners bayoneted her more than 30 times.

09

Dr Eugene Botkin

AGE AT DEATH: 53

Dr Botkin was said to have felt it his duty to follow the Romanovs into exile to help Alexei. He shared the Romanovs' 16 months of captivity.

10

Alexei Trupp

AGE AT DEATH: 59-60

Trupp was born in modern-day Latvia and became a footman in the royal household. Serving as Nicholas's valet, he shared the family's captivity and died quickly.

11

Ivan Kharitonov

AGE AT DEATH: 45-46

The cook shared the family's captivity and, like Trupp and Botkin, is thought to have died quickly during the executioners' initial salvo.

FROM RUSSIA WITH BLOOD

Even in exile on the other side of the world, Leon Trotsky could not escape Stalin's vengeance

Written by Jonathan O'Callaghan

Leon Trotsky sat down in his study in Mexico to read an article, and at that moment his killer attacked. Ramón Mercader, an assassin sent by Joseph Stalin using the pseudonym Frank Jackson, struck a blow to his head with an ice pick. Hoping for a silent kill, Trotsky survived the initial blow and fought his attacker, allowing his guards to arrive and arrest Mercader. But a day later, Trotsky passed away from his injuries.

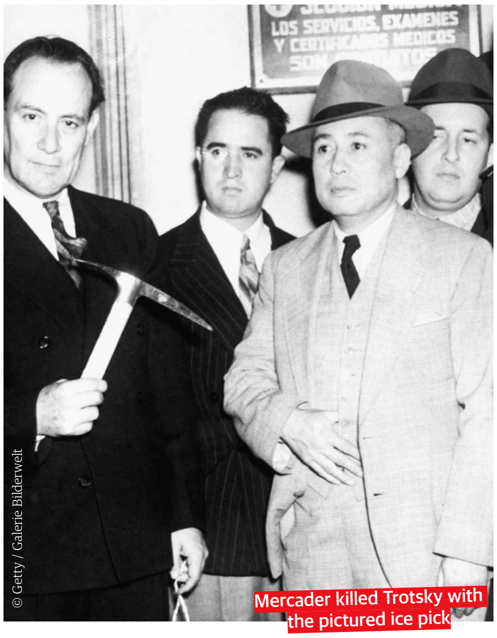
In Russia's Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, Trotsky had been a major player. He helped direct the Soviets, led by Vladimir Lenin, to seize power in October after the confusion that followed Tsar Nicholas II's forced abdication in March, and the ineffectual ruling of the Provisional Government thereafter. Lenin installed Trotsky first as foreign commissar in his new government of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, helping to end Russia's involvement in World War I in 1918, and later as war commissar, where be built up the country's Red Army. By some accounts, Trotsky believed that he himself would be next in line to lead after Lenin.

While Trotsky was a popular figure in some parts of the party ranks, others were envious of his position. When Lenin first fell ill in 1922, others began to conspire against Trotsky and eyed other suitable candidates to succeed, including a young criminal going by the name of Joseph Stalin. By the time of Lenin's eventual death in early 1924, Trotsky had been isolated within the party, and Stalin had manoeuvred himself to be in control.

Following Lenin's death, Stalin gradually cemented himself as the leader of the Soviet Union in the latter 1920s. Fearing interference from his foe, however, he decided to exile Trotsky and his followers in January 1928 to remote regions of the Soviet Union. One year later and Trotsky was banished from the country entirely, initially taking haven in Turkey before moving to France in 1933. In 1935 he had moved to Norway, before finally settling in the village of Coyoacán in Mexico in 1936.

But Trotsky did not take his exile lying down. As soon as he travelled to Turkey, he began writing about his life and the Russian Revolution. He was exceedingly critical of Stalin, going so far as to say in 1937 that Stalin had betrayed socialism and turned the Soviet Union into a totalitarian state, accusations that Stalin did not take lightly. He began hatching a plan to kill Trotsky, to prevent him writing more damning words about Stalin's reign.

The first attempt on Trotsky's life came in May 1939 in Mexico. While at home under guard, attackers dressed as policemen and soldiers fired 200 bullets at 4am at Trotsky and his wife, Natalia Sedova, through the walls of their home. Despite the shattered glass raining down in the room, Trotsky and Sedova somehow managed to survive. This first attack, however, was just the prelude to a second more cunning attempt on Trotsky's life. Trotsky himself was under no illusions that Stalin would try to kill him again.



© Getty / Galerie Bilderwelt

Mercader killed Trotsky with the pictured ice pick

Two years before the attack, a follower of Trotsky called Sylvia Ageloff had been set up with a man called Jacques Mornard at the Sorbonne in Paris,

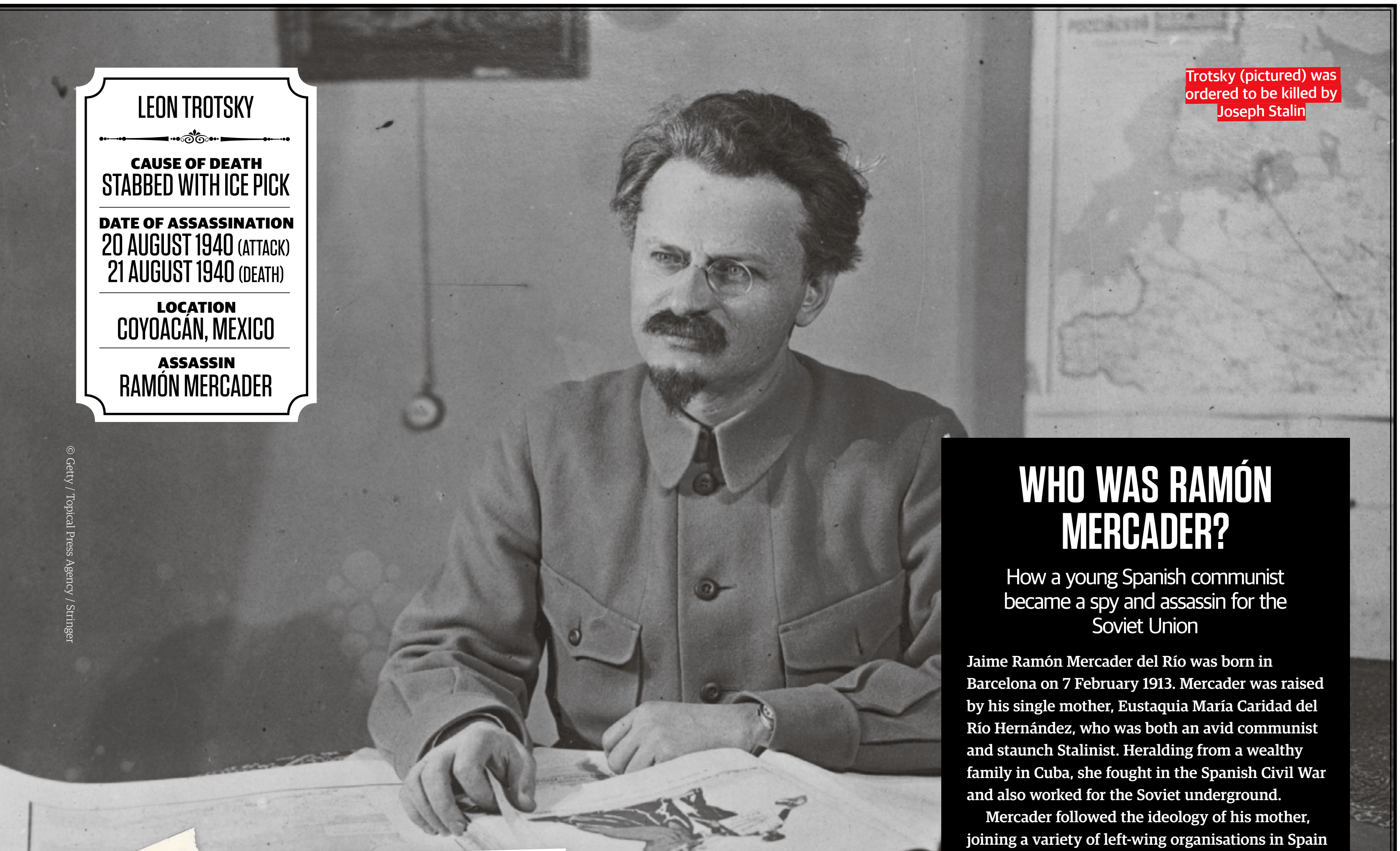
LEON TROTSKY

CAUSE OF DEATH
STABBED WITH ICE PICK

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
20 AUGUST 1940 (ATTACK)
21 AUGUST 1940 (DEATH)

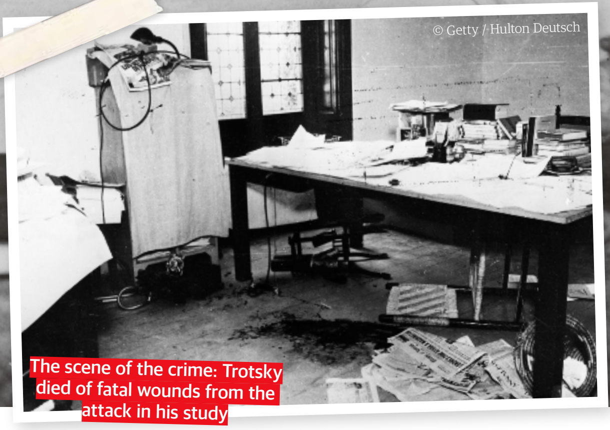
LOCATION
COYOACÁN, MEXICO

ASSASSIN
RAMÓN MERCADER



Trotsky (pictured) was ordered to be killed by Joseph Stalin

© Getty / Topical Press Agency / Stringer



© Getty / Hulton Deutsch

The scene of the crime: Trotsky died of fatal wounds from the attack in his study

portrayed as the son of a Belgian diplomat but actually a Spanish communist, Stalinist and Soviet spy called Ramón Mercader. After persuading Ageloff to move to Mexico City to work for Trotsky and his family, Mercader assumed the fake name of Frank Jacson, misspelled accidentally by Soviet forgers. He told Ageloff this was in order to avoid military service.

Every morning Mercader would drive Ageloff to Trotsky's home, building a camaraderie with the guards there. On 20 August 1940, he convinced them to let him inside on the grounds that he was writing an article about Trotsky and he wanted him to read the draft. Little did they know that Mercader had an ice pick hidden under his raincoat. After Mercader was led into the guarded study, and Trotsky sat down to read the article, he struck him in the head with the ice pick.

Mercader had opted for the ice pick over a gun to try and be discreet, killing Trotsky quietly in order to sneak out unnoticed. But Trotsky was not killed by the blow and instead fought back after letting out a cry, despite the immense wound to his head. Guards rushed to the scene but Trotsky managed to dissuade them from killing Mercader, telling them that "he must not be killed, he must talk." Mercader was sentenced to 20 years in prison, but was treated comfortably by his Soviet guards, and was declared a Hero of the Soviet Union in 1961, a year after his release. Meanwhile, Trotsky succumbed to his wounds and died a day after the assassination attempt on 21 August.

WHO WAS RAMÓN MERCADER?

How a young Spanish communist became a spy and assassin for the Soviet Union

Jaime Ramón Mercader del Río was born in Barcelona on 7 February 1913. Mercader was raised by his single mother, Eustaquia María Caridad del Río Hernández, who was both an avid communist and staunch Stalinist. Heralding from a wealthy family in Cuba, she fought in the Spanish Civil War and also worked for the Soviet underground.

Mercader followed the ideology of his mother, joining a variety of left-wing organisations in Spain and spending some time in prison for his actions. After his release he was eventually recruited by the NKVD, or the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, a Soviet secret police department, as a Soviet spy in the late 1930s.

While studying at the Sorbonne university in Paris, Mercader began dating an American Trotskyist called Sylvia Ageloff. After moving to Ageloff's home of Brooklyn, New York, he convinced Ageloff to come with him to Mexico City in October 1939, where she began working for Trotsky, setting the scene for his murder on 20 August 1940.

Mercader died from lung cancer in Havana, Cuba in 1978, reportedly with the final words: "I hear it always. I hear the scream. I know he's waiting for me on the other side."

Mercader, pictured in hospital after the attack on Trotsky

© Getty / Galerie Bilderwelt

OPERATION ANTHROPOID

KILLING HITLER'S HANGMAN

He was the embodiment of blonde, blue-eyed barbarism. If Hitler were the judge and his cadre of Nazi cronies the jury, then SS Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich was the executioner. His own demise became the most high-profile assassination of World War II

Written by Michael Haskew

In the spring of 1939, the German Army goose-stepped into the streets of the ancient city of Prague without firing a shot. Hitler had completed his conquest of the neighbouring state and next in his mind was the exploitation of the territory gained and the harnessing of Czech industry for the benefit of the German war machine.

Six months before the Führer plunged Europe into war, he divided the former Czechoslovakia into two Reich protectorates, Bohemia-Moravia and the Slovak Republic. To govern Bohemia-Moravia and implement his plan, Hitler installed Baron Konstantin von Neurath. Soon enough, however, von Neurath was judged as ineffective. Despite the fact that about one third of German arms and munitions were produced in Czech factories, productivity in the protectorate was not meeting the Führer's expectations. The people remained defiant, sometimes openly contemptuous of their Nazi oppressors.

By late 1941, it was time for a change and Heydrich was chosen to bring the Czech people to heel. Born in the German city of Halle on 17 March 1904, he was the son of musician and opera singer Bruno Richard Heydrich and Elisabeth Anna Maria Amalia Krantz. He was raised Roman Catholic, in a financially well-to-do, cultured family. He was educated in the finest schools, exhibited impeccable manners and proved to be an accomplished pilot, fencer and violinist.

As a young man, Heydrich became involved with the right-wing Freikorps under the government of the post-World War I Weimar Republic and honed early anti-Semitic sentiments. He aspired to a career in the German Navy, however, while engaged to Lina von Osten, who he married in 1931, he was accused of having an affair with the daughter of a shipyard manager. The scandal cost Heydrich his commission and he was forced to resign for 'conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman'.

Members of the Nazi elite gather in Vienna circa 1938. Heydrich is pictured on the right

Reichsprotektor of Bohemia and Moravia, Reinhard Heydrich, perhaps the most ruthless of all Nazis, succumbed to wounds inflicted by assassins

REINHARD HEYDRICH

CAUSE OF DEATH
INJURIES FROM EXPLOSION

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
27 MAY 1942 (ATTACK)
4 JUNE 1942 (DEATH)

LOCATION
PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

ASSASSINS
JOZEF GABČÍK
AND JAN KUBIŠ

BLONDE AMBITION

Within months, Heydrich found renewed purpose, joining the Nazi Party and the SS. Subsequently, he enjoyed a meteoric rise to power. As deputy to Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, leader of the SS, the dashing young officer who cut the figure of the 'Aryan ideal' became the architect and head of the SS security apparatus, the Sicherheitsdienst, or SD.

By the time Heydrich – newly appointed as acting reichsprotektor of Bohemia and Moravia – arrived in Prague to take charge in September 1941, he had compiled an impressive résumé. His hands were stained with the blood of the Night of the Long Knives, the 1934 purge of the SA (Stormtroopers); he was instrumental in the scandalous sex and smear campaigns that effectively ended the careers of Field Marshals Werner von Blomberg and Werner von Fritsch; he had worked tirelessly towards the annexation of both Austria and Czechoslovakia into the Third Reich; and he orchestrated the 'border incident' with Poland that led directly to the outbreak of war.

Ruthless, cold, and utterly devoid of conscience, Heydrich understood his role and set about the task of pacifying the Czechs with Teutonic efficiency. Approximately 5,000 leaders of the Czech resistance and members of the intelligentsia were swiftly rounded up, some of them summarily executed. Heydrich's new nickname, 'The Butcher of Prague,' was well earned.

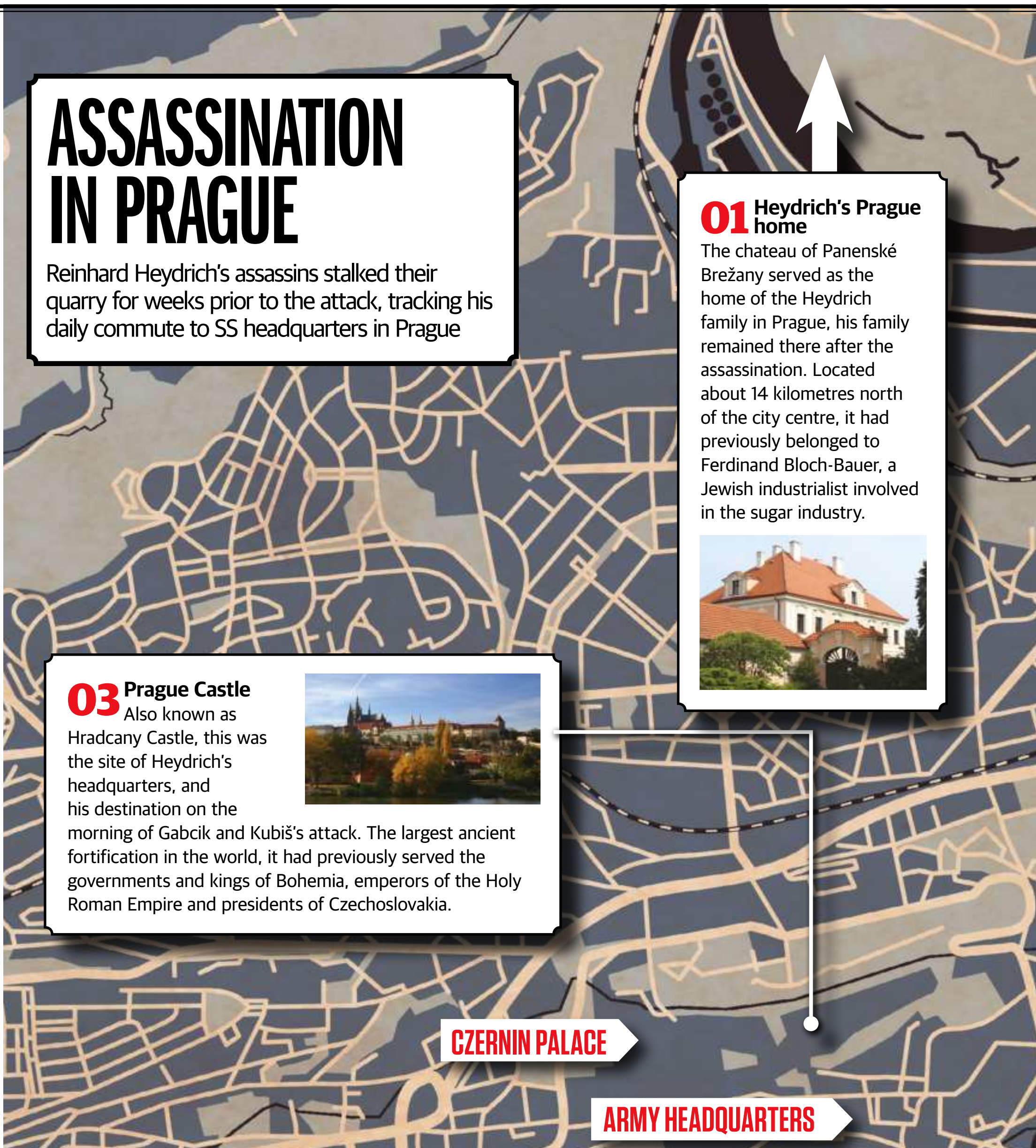
As Czech newspapers published stories of the brutal Nazi crackdown, Heydrich implemented a policy he referred to as 'whip and sugar'. Workers were given ample food, and those who achieved production goals were rewarded, but the threat of severe punishment was always present. Industrial output soared, and the Czech government – under puppet President Emil Hachá – endorsed the growing compliance.

Meanwhile, Eduard Beneš, president of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile in London, watched with increasing alarm. Beneš realised that closer co-operation between the Nazis and the Czech people was hastening his country down the dark road to full assimilation into the Third Reich. Such co-operation was unthinkable.

Beneš concluded that a bold stroke was necessary. The assassination of a high-ranking Nazi would demonstrate to the Czech people that the resistance to Hitler remained viable. Britain and the United States would acknowledge the Czech commitment to the Allied cause, while the Germans would be shaken. Although the prospect of devastating reprisals against the Czech people was real, Beneš believed the risk was worth taking – and the obvious target was Reinhard Heydrich.

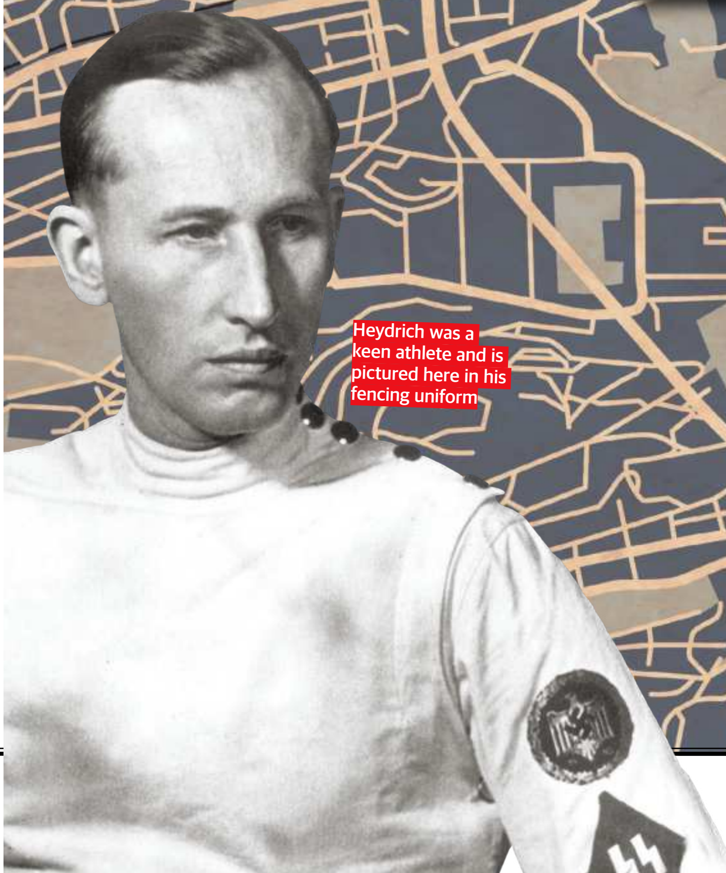
ASSASSINATION IN PRAGUE

Reinhard Heydrich's assassins stalked their quarry for weeks prior to the attack, tracking his daily commute to SS headquarters in Prague

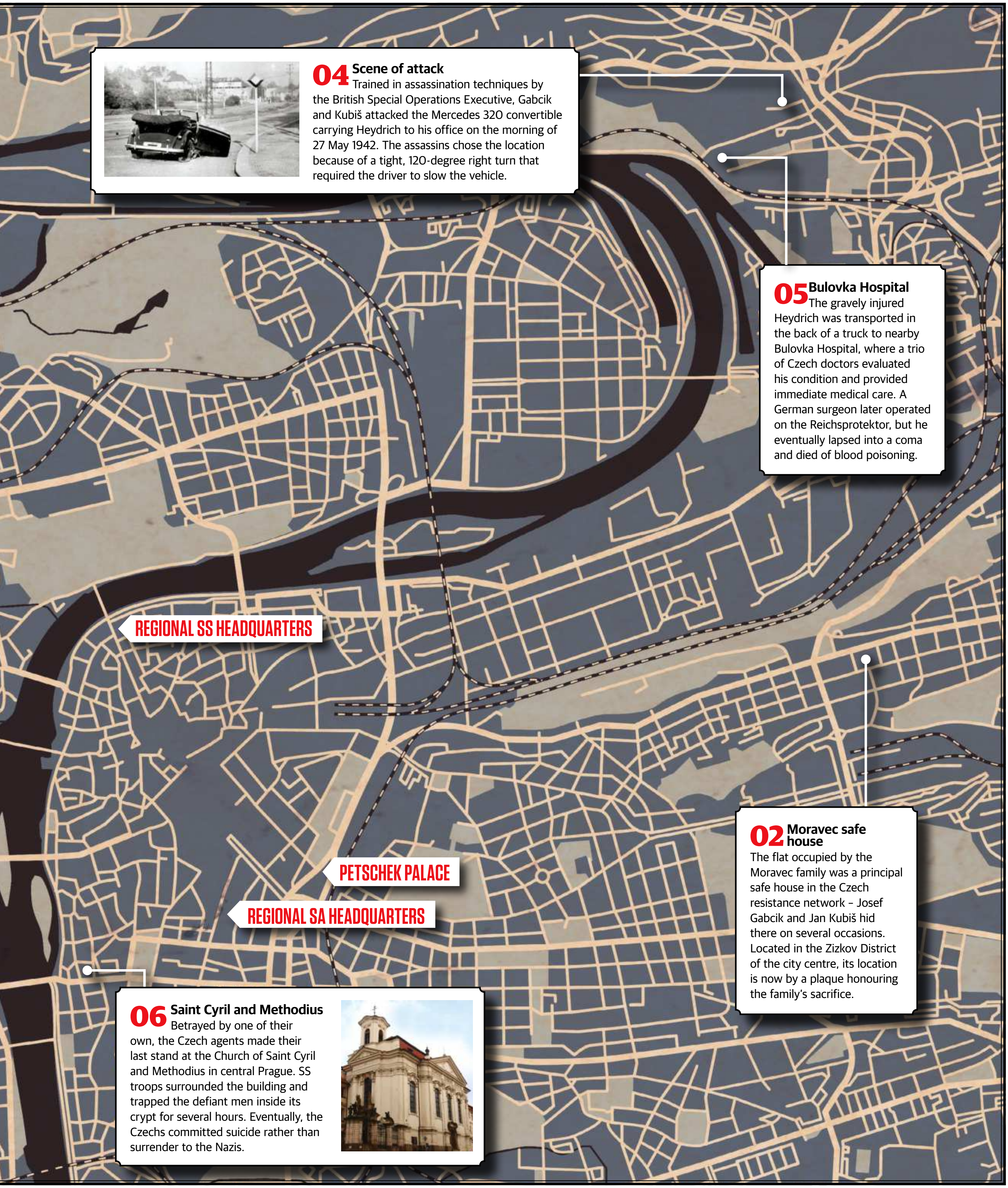


01 Heydrich's Prague home
The chateau of Panenské Brežany served as the home of the Heydrich family in Prague, his family remained there after the assassination. Located about 14 kilometres north of the city centre, it had previously belonged to Ferdinand Bloch-Bauer, a Jewish industrialist involved in the sugar industry.

03 Prague Castle
Also known as Hradcany Castle, this was the site of Heydrich's headquarters, and his destination on the morning of Gabcik and Kubiš's attack. The largest ancient fortification in the world, it had previously served the governments and kings of Bohemia, emperors of the Holy Roman Empire and presidents of Czechoslovakia.



Heydrich was a keen athlete and is pictured here in his fencing uniform



04 **Scene of attack**

Trained in assassination techniques by the British Special Operations Executive, Gabcik and Kubiš attacked the Mercedes 320 convertible carrying Heydrich to his office on the morning of 27 May 1942. The assassins chose the location because of a tight, 120-degree right turn that required the driver to slow the vehicle.

05 **Bulovka Hospital**

The gravely injured Heydrich was transported in the back of a truck to nearby Bulovka Hospital, where a trio of Czech doctors evaluated his condition and provided immediate medical care. A German surgeon later operated on the Reichsprotektor, but he eventually lapsed into a coma and died of blood poisoning.

02 **Moravec safe house**

The flat occupied by the Moravec family was a principal safe house in the Czech resistance network – Josef Gabcik and Jan Kubiš hid there on several occasions. Located in the Zizkov District of the city centre, its location is now by a plaque honouring the family's sacrifice.

06 **Saint Cyril and Methodius**

Betrayed by one of their own, the Czech agents made their last stand at the Church of Saint Cyril and Methodius in central Prague. SS troops surrounded the building and trapped the defiant men inside its crypt for several hours. Eventually, the Czechs committed suicide rather than surrender to the Nazis.

OPERATION ANTHROPOID

Beneš authorised a scheme codenamed Anthropoid. Fraught with peril, the mission was to involve a pair of soldiers of the Free Czechoslovak Army (FCA) in Britain, who were recruited specifically for the assassination. Trained by the British Special Operations Executive (SOE), the agents would parachute in near Prague and would operate completely independently.

Quietly, the search for a pair of intrepid and patriotic men produced two sergeants of the FCA, Josef Gabcik and Karel Svoboda, who immediately volunteered, although neither was initially aware of Anthropoid's objective. The two undertook rigorous training at the SOE Special Training School in Scotland and Cholmondeley Castle in Cheshire, but Svoboda suffered a serious head injury and was replaced by another recruit, Jan Kubiš, resulting in frustrating delays.

Finally, on 28 December 1941, everything was ready. At Tempsford airfield in Bedfordshire, Gabcik and Kubiš boarded a Royal Air Force Handley-Page Halifax four-engine bomber of No 138 Squadron.

Along with the would-be assassins, two teams of radio technicians assigned to communications and logistics missions were also to drop into Czechoslovakia that night.

Rather than radios, Gabcik and Kubiš carried weapons that the SOE considered well-suited to the task of killing at close quarter. They had been trained in the use of the 9mm Sten Gun - a cheaply produced submachine gun that was light and relatively small - and modified No 73 anti-tank grenades, which packed a powerful 1.6 kilograms of explosives inside a fragmentation cylinder.

With Flight Lieutenant Ron Hockey at the controls, the Halifax roared down the runway into the night. The aircraft flew over France and across the German frontier. Above Darmstadt, Hockey had to dodge two Luftwaffe night fighters.

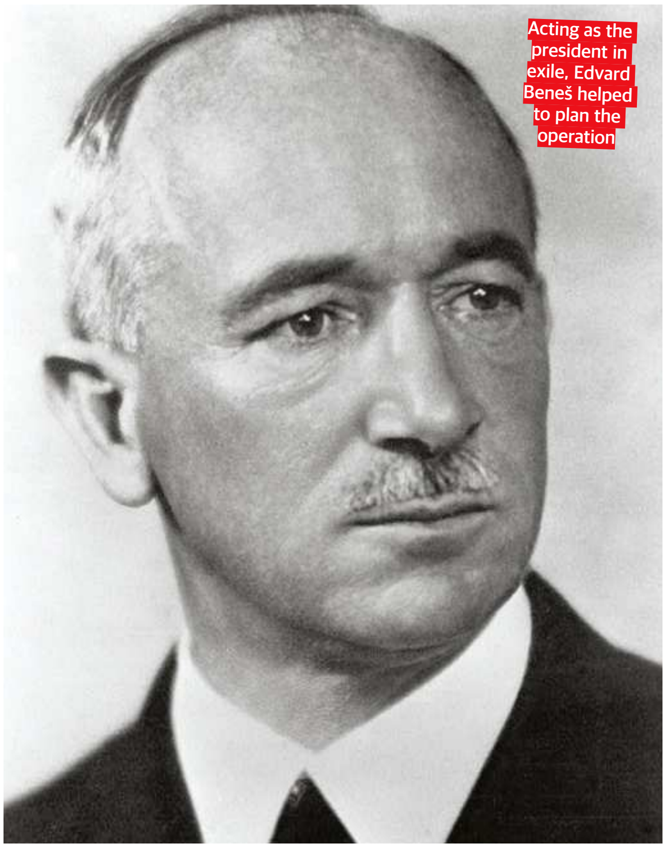
As the Halifax neared Czech airspace, the weather rapidly deteriorated. Heavy snow blanketed the countryside below, obscuring reference points that were counted on to identify the intended drop zone near the city of Pilsen. Just before 2.30am on 29 December, Gabcik and Kubiš jumped into the black sky. The pair descended earthward as the bomber droned on to drop the radio teams some distance away. The agents landed in an open field near the village of Nehvizdy, 20 kilometres from Prague and far from the expected drop zone.

IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS

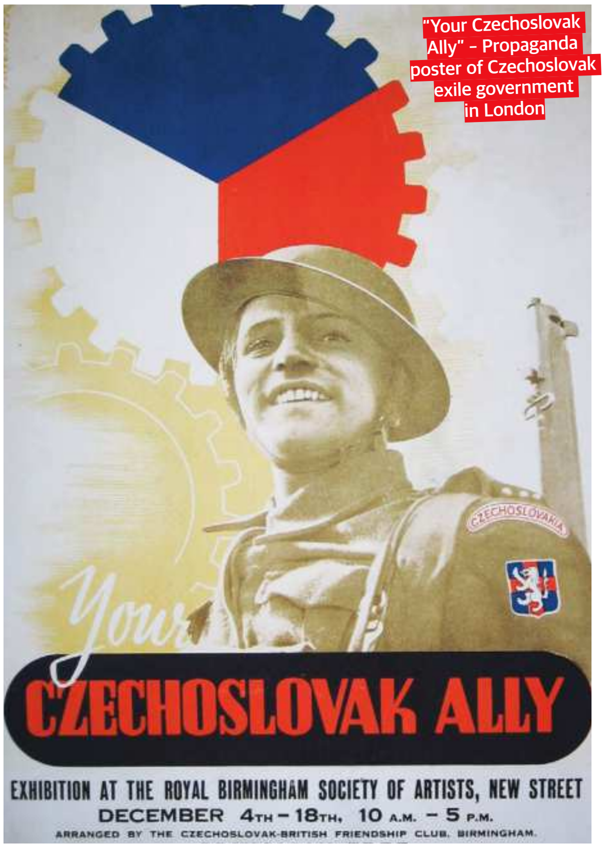
Gabcik and Kubiš ran into trouble from the moment they landed. They had no idea where they were and Gabcik had seriously injured his left foot. They buried their parachutes and took shelter in an empty shed, storing the suitcases that held the tools of assassination. Gabcik leaned heavily on his fellow agent's shoulder as they laboured through the deep snow to an abandoned quarry. While they ate a cold meal and considered their options, a miller, aroused by the engines of the British bomber, had come out to see what the disturbance was about.

The friendly villager offered to put the two in touch with the local resistance and offered a temporary haven. Although they had been warned to avoid such contact, Gabcik and Kubiš determined that they had no choice. Four days

"Four days after parachuting into the protectorate, they were handed over to resistance members and smuggled into Prague"



Acting as the president in exile, Edvard Beneš helped to plan the operation


CZECHOSLOVAKIA
Your
CZECHOSLOVAK ALLY
EXHIBITION AT THE ROYAL BIRMINGHAM SOCIETY OF ARTISTS, NEW STREET
DECEMBER 4TH – 18TH, 10 A.M. – 5 P.M.
ARRANGED BY THE CZECHOSLOVAK-BRITISH FRIENDSHIP CLUB, BIRMINGHAM.

"Your Czechoslovak Ally" – Propaganda poster of Czechoslovak exile government in London

Heydrich and Karl Frank parade outside Prague Castle, January 1941 after parachuting into the protectorate, they were handed over to resistance members and smuggled into Prague, where they received new papers to replace the obviously bogus ones fabricated in Britain. Gabcik's foot required two months to heal, and during that time, the agents were shuttled regularly from one safe house to another. On several occasions, the agents stayed at the home of Marie Moravec and her 17-year-old son, Ata. The house was a centre of resistance activity and both men became close to the family.

Meanwhile, Beneš became increasingly concerned with the Anthropoid team. The government-in-exile had heard nothing since its departure in December. One of the radio teams that parachuted that night had disbanded immediately when its equipment was damaged during the drop. The other was operational and was ordered to find out what was happening.

Josef Valcik, a radio team member, was reunited with Gabcik and Kubiš in Prague and updated London. At the same time, it was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the security of Operation Anthropoid. In March 1942, two more radio teams parachuted into the protectorate, both were hounded by the Gestapo, their members killed or dispersed. One refugee from these abortive teams was Sergeant Karel Curda, who later went on to play a pivotal role in the Anthropoid endgame.

STALKING PREY

With Gabcik again mobile, the assassins gathered intelligence on the Reichprotektor's daily routine. They tracked his movements and learned his habits through resistance operatives and contact with members of Heydrich's own household staff. They watched the dark-green Mercedes convertible that commuted daily from Heydrich's home – a chateau in the Prague suburb of Panenske Brezany – to Hradcany Castle, where the black flag of the SS flew and the Reichsprotektor was surrounded by heavily armed guards. Heydrich's morning drive was made without escort; it was decided that the best opportunity for success was to attack the car.

ANTHROPOID'S SOLDIERS

Trained in the art of assassination and willing to forfeit their lives, two soldiers of the Free Czechoslovak Army (FCA) were joined by resistance comrades committed to the operation

JAROSLAV SUSTR

A captain in the FCA, Sustr was largely responsible for training the Operation Anthropoid agents in preparation for their mission. He also accompanied them aboard the aircraft that dropped them into the occupied Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia.

Captain Jaroslav Sustr was familiar with the area where the Anthropoid agents were to parachute, but heavy snow obscured the landscape

JOZEF GABCIK

A former locksmith from Slovakia, Gabcik was the triggerman in Operation Anthropoid. His cheaply made Sten Gun, nicknamed the 'Woolworth Gun', jammed and failed to fire when Gabcik was only a few feet away from Reinhard Heydrich's Mercedes convertible.

Staff Sergeant Jozef Gabcik died in the crypt of the Church of Saint Cyril and Methodius, relentlessly hunted after the assassination of Heydrich

JAN KUBIŠ

The son of a Moravian peasant family, Kubiš hurled the Type 73 anti-tank grenade that inflicted the mortal wounds on Reinhard Heydrich. A staff sergeant in the FCA, Kubiš fled Czechoslovakia and had fought the Germans in France in the spring of 1940.

Jan Kubiš was killed during the gun battle that erupted around the Church of Saint Cyril and Methodius on 18 June 1942

JOSEF VALCIK

Born in Valasske Klobouky, in the Zlin region of Moravia, Valcik was a member of an FCA radio team dropped into Bohemia-Moravia to set up communications links. Joining Operation Anthropoid, he signalled the approach of Heydrich's Mercedes with a handheld mirror.

Josef Valcik committed suicide in the crypt of the Church of Saint Cyril and Methodius

ADOLF OPALKA

Born in Resice near the Austro-Hungarian border, Opalka parachuted into Bohemia-Moravia as leader of the group codenamed Out Distance. After his group was dropped in the wrong place and equipment was lost, he made his way to Prague and supported Operation Anthropoid.

Severely wounded by shrapnel, 1st Lieutenant Adolf Opalka committed suicide in the Church of Saint Cyril and Methodius

KAREL CURDA

A traitor to his fellow Czechs, Curda received blood money from the Nazis for information that led to the deaths of the Operation Anthropoid conspirators. After the war, Curda was found guilty of treason and hanged on 29 April 1947.

When asked about his treachery, Karel Curda replied, "I think you would have done the same for 1 million marks"

“Kubiš threw a grenade… The blast showered Heydrich with shrapnel”

Heydrich’s regular route presented one promising location for the assault. On a street named V Holesovickach, near the intersection with another road, Zenklova, and trolley stop number 14, the route descended towards a bridge across the Vltava River and made a hairpin, 120-degree right turn. Heydrich’s driver would have to slow down and shift into a lower gear to negotiate the curve. It would be at that moment that the Reichsprotektor would be most vulnerable.

Disguised as commuters waiting for the tram, Gabcik and Kubiš would take positions along the curb. Valcik and conspirator Adolf Opalka would occupy a vantage point on a hill about 100 meters away, using a mirror to signal the car’s approach. At the right time, Gabcik would step into the street and fire his Sten Gun at near point-blank range. If necessary, Kubiš would step forward and toss the anti-tank grenades to finish the job.

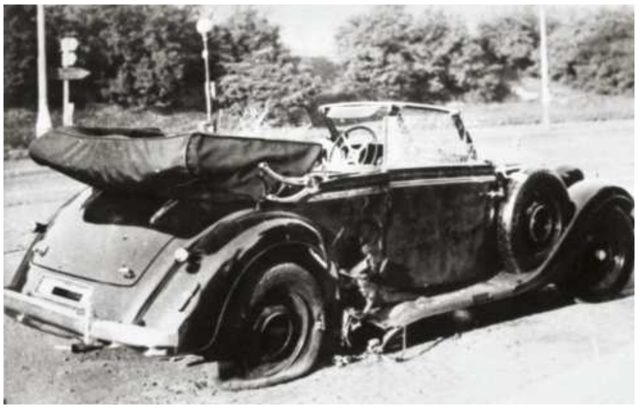
Early on the morning of 27 May 1942, the assassins rode the trolley to the Prague suburb of Zizkov, where they borrowed bicycles, tied their suitcases to the handlebars and then pedalled to the ambush scene. As they waited nervously, Heydrich lingered. The Reichsprotektor played in the garden with his children for a few moments and spoke with his pregnant wife.

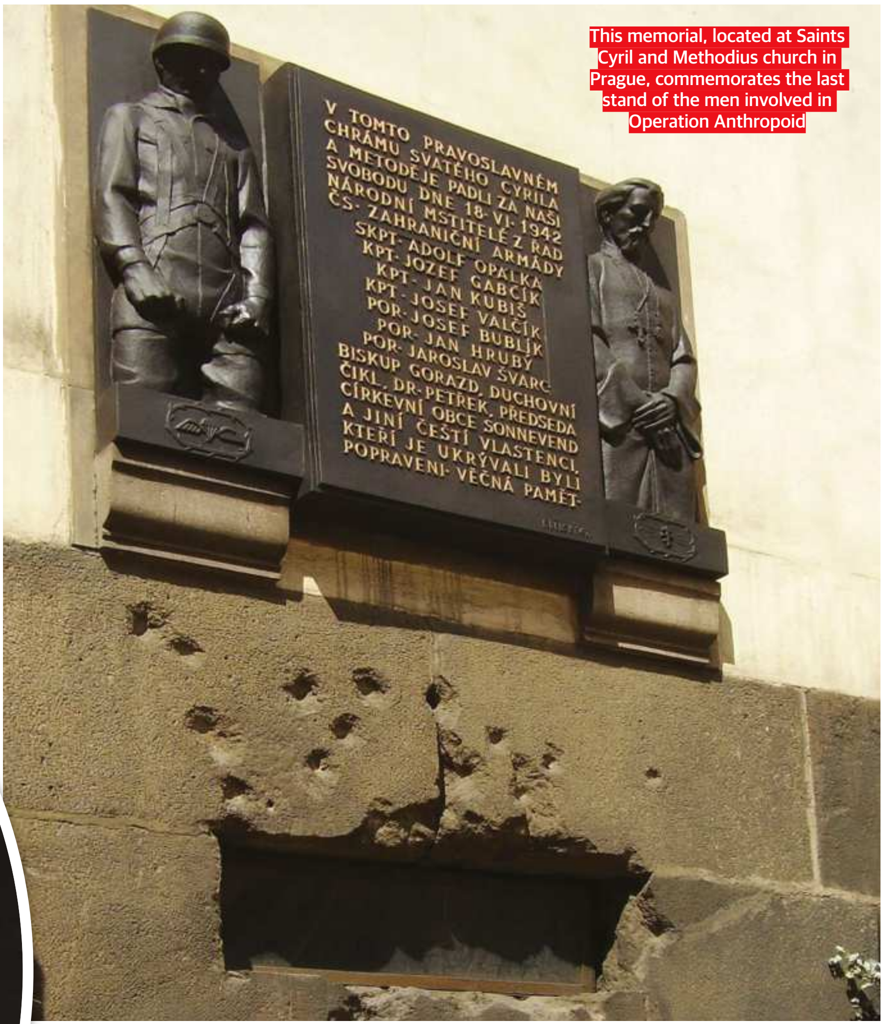
At 10am, Heydrich climbed into the front passenger seat of the big Mercedes and nodded to his driver, SS Technical Sergeant Klein. It was unusual for Heydrich to run late, and the Czech agents wondered if they should abort the mission. Around 10.30am, Valcik flashed the mirror warning.

The sleek green Mercedes rumbled into view, and as Klein shifted and applied the brake Gabcik whipped his Sten Gun from beneath his raincoat and pulled the trigger, but nothing happened. The gun had jammed. Astonished, Heydrich made a fatal mistake, ordering Klein to stop the car. He stood up, and tried to shoot the fleeing Gabcik with his pistol. Kubiš ran forward and threw a grenade, which exploded beneath the car’s right rear wheel well. The blast showered Heydrich and Kubiš with shrapnel. Windows in a nearby trolley car were shattered and two black SS uniform jackets were blown across overhead wires.

Bleeding profusely from wounds to his face, Kubiš mounted his bicycle and fired a shot into the air to scatter a group of bystanders caught along the street. Valcik and Opalka made good their escape as Gabcik ran for his bicycle but could not reach it because of the growing crowd. Heydrich’s bullets whistled past him. Klein thought that the Reichsprotektor was unhurt and briefly chased Kubiš. When the driver raised his pistol to fire, however, he hit the magazine release and emptied the weapon by mistake, and so Kubiš slipped away.

Gabcik tossed his useless Sten Gun aside, sought the scant shelter of a telegraph pole, and then sprinted across the trolley tracks behind one of the cars. Apparently unaware of his wounds, Heydrich had stepped into the street and continued to fire at


Above: Reinhard Heydrich’s heavily damaged Mercedes 320 convertible sits abandoned, following the attack by Czech agents on 27 May 1942


V TOMTO PRAVOSLAVNÉM
CHRÁMU SVATÉHO CYRILA
A METODĚJE PADLI ZA NAŠI
SVOBODU DNE 18-VI-1942
NÁRODNÍ MSTITELÉ Z RAD
ČS. ZAHRANIČNÍ ARMÁDY
SKPT. ADOLF OPÁLKA
KPT. JOZEF GABČÍK
KPT. JAN KUBIŠ
KPT. JOSEF VALČÍK
POR. JOSEF BUBLÍK
POR. JAN HRUBÝ
POR. JAROSLAV ŠVARC
BISKUP GORAZD, DUCHOVNÍ
ČIKL, DR. PETŘEK, PŘEDSEDA
CÍRKEVNÍ OBCE SONNEVEND
A JINÍ ČEŠTÍ VLASTENCI,
KTEŘÍ JE UKRÝVALI BYLI
POPRAVENI. VĚČNÁ PAMĚŤ
This memorial, located at Saints Cyril and Methodius church in Prague, commemorates the last stand of the men involved in Operation Anthropoid

Left: Jan Kubiš succumbed to his wounds during the gun fight with the SS

Stone memorials mark the former locations of homes in Lezaky

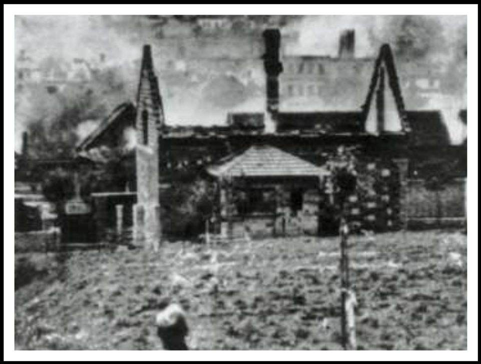
AFTERMATH AT LIDICE-LEZAKY

On the day of the lavish Nazi state funeral for SS Obergruppenführer and Reichsprotektor Reinhard Heydrich, the tiny Czechoslovakian village of Lidice suffered an agonising death. Without warning, SS troops descended on the cluster of homes and shops, 30 kilometres outside Prague at 9.30pm on 9 June 1942.

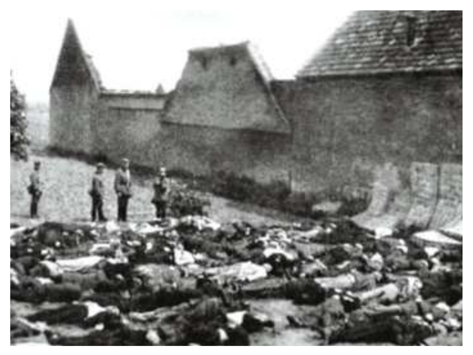
The Germans supposedly believed the townspeople had provided support to the Czech agents who assassinated Heydrich. Residents were forced from their homes at gunpoint. Mothers and their children were separated and then herded into a schoolhouse. More than 170 men were gathered in a barn, led outside in groups of ten, and executed. 26 more were burned alive inside another structure. 11 men returning from a shift at the local mine were shot. The women were sent to Ravensbruck concentration camp. The children were either placed with SS families or shipped to the camp at Gneisenau.

Under orders from SS Obergruppenführer Karl Hermann Frank and Oberst-Gruppenführer Kurt Daluege, the soldiers razed Lidice, removing nearly 71,000 square metres of rubble and planting grain to cover the site.

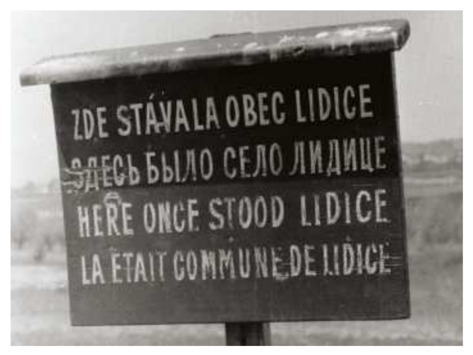
Days later, a radio belonging to a Czech resistance group was found in the town of Lezaky. On 24 June, more than 500 SS troops swept up the inhabitants. All 33 adults were immediately shot. 11 of 13 children died in the gas chamber at the Chelmno concentration camp. Two girls, selected for 'Germanisation', survived the war and returned to their families. In December 1943, a group of 65 labourers removed the rubble of the homes in Lezaky. Today, memorials stand in their places.



Taken before the SS cleared the rubble of Lidice, this stark photo of destruction revealed the brutality of the Nazis



The bodies of men massacred at Horák's Farm in Lidice. This photo was confiscated from its owner by the Gestapo



A sign displaying where the village of Lidice once stood. The sign is written in multiple languages, including British and French

This haunting memorial pays tribute to the lost children of Lidice, innocent victims of unspeakable Nazi cruelty after Heydrich's assassination his assailant. Within seconds, he collapsed, blood spouting from his side. As Klein returned to the scene, Heydrich staggered to his feet and shrieked, "Get that Bastard!" Klein turned to chase Gabcik, and Heydrich lurched a few steps before falling across the hood of the Mercedes.

The burly Klein chased Gabcik down a side street. The Czech ducked into a butcher shop only to be confronted with the owner, a Nazi sympathiser who yelled, "He's in here!" Klein huffed into the shop, and Gabcik shot him in both legs. The Czech dashed outside, and Klein handed his pistol to the butcher, who refused to continue the chase. Gabcik reached temporary safety.

VIGIL AND VENGEANCE

A crowd of perplexed Czechs watched Heydrich writhe in the road, but no one came forward to render aid. Finally, a Czech woman yelled for help and an off duty policeman flagged down a passing van. The driver declined to get involved, so a second truck was stopped. Heydrich was assisted into the cab, but it was apparent that the ride to nearby Bulkova Hospital would be too painful. The wounded man was laid face down in the back on a filthy floor strewn with cans of floor polish.

Just after 11am, Heydrich reached the hospital, where Vladimir Snajdr, a Czech surgeon, and two other Czech doctors named Puhala and Slanina were first to render medical aid. Heydrich refused a shot of morphine and hissed that he wanted a German doctor.

Slanina assessed Heydrich's condition and noted later, "With a forceps and a few swabs, I tried to see the depth of the wound. I found pneumothorax, contusion of the lung and that the metal splinter, some three centimetres large, also transported pieces of upholstery through the diaphragm into his abdomen, causing damage the spleen and the tail of the pancreas."

> "The Germans shouted to the cornered men to give up. 'We are Czechs; we shall never surrender!' came the reply"

Further examination revealed that Heydrich's diaphragm was ruptured. Fragments of the car seat's horsehair stuffing were embedded in the wound. A German surgeon named Hohlbaum operated, removing the spleen and the crushed tip of the 11th rib and suturing the diaphragm.

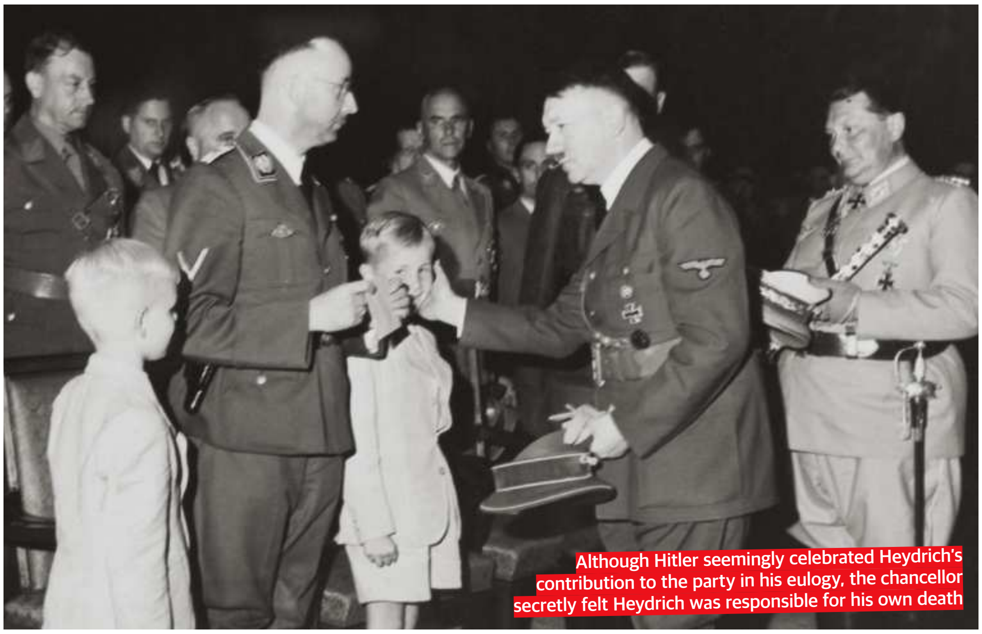
The initial prognosis for the Reichsprotektor was good, and Himmler called the hospital hourly for updates on Heydrich's condition. The threats of infection, however, were real. Gangrene or septicaemia could seriously complicate the recovery. Within hours of the operation Heydrich developed a fever. Copious amounts of fluid drained continually from the wound for several days. However, by the morning of 2 June, the fever had ebbed and the drainage was slowing. It appeared that Heydrich was recovering. At midday on 3 June, he sat in bed eating a late breakfast and suddenly went into shock. Lapsing into a deep coma, he died at 4.30am the next morning. The likely cause of death was blood poisoning, although an unsubstantiated theory has suggested that the anti-tank grenade hurled by Kubiš contained some form of poison.

When news of Heydrich's death reached Berlin, Hitler flew into a rage, demanding the slaughter of 10,000 Czechs in retribution. Himmler ordered 100 Czech prisoners executed on the night of the attack. Out of chaos, a concerted SS and Gestapo effort to find the assassins emerged. Karl Hermann Frank, a Sudeten Nazi and deputy of Heydrich, employed a campaign of 'selective terror' headed by SS Oberst-Gruppenführer Kurt Daluege. A reward of 10 million crowns was offered for information on the assassins' whereabouts, and it came with a warning that those who aided them would be executed, along with their families. Nearly 500 death sentences were swiftly carried out. During the sweep, a reported 13,000 Czechs were arrested and 36,000 homes were searched.

The pressure on Gabcik and Kubiš intensified rapidly. Shuffled from place to place as the Nazi cordon tightened, they were finally taken along with five other Czech agents to the Church of Saint Cyril and Methodius in central Prague. Vladimir Petrek, one of the ministers, had agreed to hide them in the crypt, but one of their number, turncoat Karel Curda, was missing.

Unnerved by the wave of terror that followed the assassination, Curda confessed that he had been an agent and also compromised several safe houses around the city. Among these was the home of Marie Moravec, who committed suicide with poison as Gestapo agents closed in on the morning

Karl Hermann Frank was a Nazi official in Prague who was responsible for the reprisal attack on Lidice



Although Hitler seemingly celebrated Heydrich's contribution to the party in his eulogy, the chancellor secretly felt Heydrich was responsible for his own death of 17 June. Ata Moravec was dragged to Gestapo headquarters, forced to drink large amounts of alcohol, and tortured. When the Germans presented the severed head of his mother floating in a fish tank, the teenager finally broke, identifying the church as a possible hiding place for the assassins.

Gabcik and Kubiš had remained at large for three weeks after their attack on Heydrich, but at 4am on the morning of 18 June 1942, the SS and Gestapo thoroughly searched the church. Although they found nothing initially, when they approached the choir loft, a hand grenade exploded nearby and rifle fire erupted. The 750 SS troops ringing the church opened a fusillade of fire. A two-hour battle followed, and several of the agents, including Kubiš and Opalka, were killed or wounded. The Germans shouted to the cornered men to give up. "We are Czechs; we shall never surrender!" came the reply. Several German soldiers had already been killed, and storming the crypt would be costly.

The impasse was finally broken when the Germans ordered the Prague Fire Brigade to run hoses through holes and vents to flood the crypt. Although the hoses were cut, a ladder used to reach them was pulled out and the influx of water resumed. Hours passed. Finally, as SS troops prepared for an overwhelming assault four gunshots rang out. With their ammunition exhausted, the trapped Czechs had tried to dig their way out of the chamber as water continued to rise.

When they had lost all hope, they committed suicide. The bodies from the crypt were all pulled out onto the sidewalk and Curda was there in order to identify the corpses of Valcik and Gabcik.

The bloodletting, though, was far from over. For weeks the Germans continued to exact revenge upon the Czech people, slaughtering at least 5,000 civilians and condemning others to the horror of Mauthausen Concentration Camp. When the orgy of retribution finally subsided, the villages of Lidice and Lezaky had been wiped from the map. The dead included 13 members of Saint Cyril and Methodius Church and more than 250 relatives and supposed friends of the Czech agents. Whether the completion of Operation Anthropoid was worth the terrible price remains a topic of debate among historians.

Heydrich's coffin was draped with the Nazi flag and returned to Berlin five days after his death. A pompous state funeral was held in the Mosaic Hall of the New Reich Chancellery, and both Hitler and Himmler eulogised the Butcher of Prague. The Führer said that Heydrich possessed an "iron heart" and had fallen, "...as a martyr for the preservation and safeguarding of the Reich." Heydrich's body was buried in the Invalidenfriedhof Cemetery in Berlin; however, his legacy of evil has lived on, and it will never be forgotten.

FUNERAL FOR A FIEND

When Reinhard Heydrich, the dreaded Reichsprotektor of Bohemia-Moravia, breathed his last in a bed in Prague's Bulovka Hospital, police officer Bernhard Wehner observed a serene countenance, which belied the legacy of torture and murder the top Nazi left behind.

Wehner noted an, "...uncanny spirituality and entirely perverted beauty, like a renaissance cardinal." It was a moment of supreme irony, and only the beginning, as the Nazi hierarchy and its puppets within the administration of Czech President Emil Hácha, heaped their lavish tributes on Heydrich.

An extended period of ritual mourning followed the Reichsprotektor's death. A six-man SS honour guard stood vigil around the flag covered coffin, topped with a grandiose wreath, as the body lay in state in Prague's Hradcany Castle. Behind the bier hung the sinister black banner of the SS, emblazoned with the familiar lightning runes.

On 7 June 1942, three days after Heydrich's death, the coffin was placed on a gun carriage and paraded in eerie grandeur through the Old Town section of Prague. For the hours-long journey to Berlin, the body was then put aboard a funeral train festooned in black crepe. Hachá and other Czech officials chose to make the journey in the vain hope that such a gesture might assuage Hitler's anger and his desire for German soldiers to "wade in blood" to find Heydrich's assassins.

Upon arrival in Berlin, Heydrich's body was transferred to the New Reich Chancellery. His decorations, including the German Order, Gold Wound Badge, Blood Order Medal and War Merit Cross 1st Class with Swords, were displayed on a pillow. Wreathes, swastikas and pylons topped with flaming torches surrounded the gabled coffin.

The state funeral was a spectacle of Nazi propaganda. Hitler greeted Heydrich's children as the strains of Siegfried's Funeral March from composer Richard Wagner's Götterdämmerung provided sullen background music. Himmler was visibly moved. The Führer expressed his fondness for Heydrich by using the familiar "dir" rather than the formal "ihnen" and called the departed: "One of the finest National Socialists, one of the strongest defenders of German Reich thought, and one of the greatest opponents of all enemies of the Reich."

Following a lengthy procession through the streets of the Nazi capital, Heydrich's grave in the Invalidenfriedhof Cemetery was topped with a temporary wooden marker. An impressive monument, designed by sculptor Arno Breker and architect Wilhelm Kreis, was planned, but the exigencies of war intervened and it was never built.

Today, much for the better, the exact location of Heydrich's grave within the cemetery's confines remains unknown.

DEUTSCHES REICH
REINHARD HEYDRICH
7.III.1904 4.VI.1942
60
+440
BÖHMEN UND MÄHREN

A postage stamp issued by the Third Reich in honour of the slain Heydrich features his death mask

Heydrich's state funeral was a lavish affair, and was attended by all the top Nazi party officials

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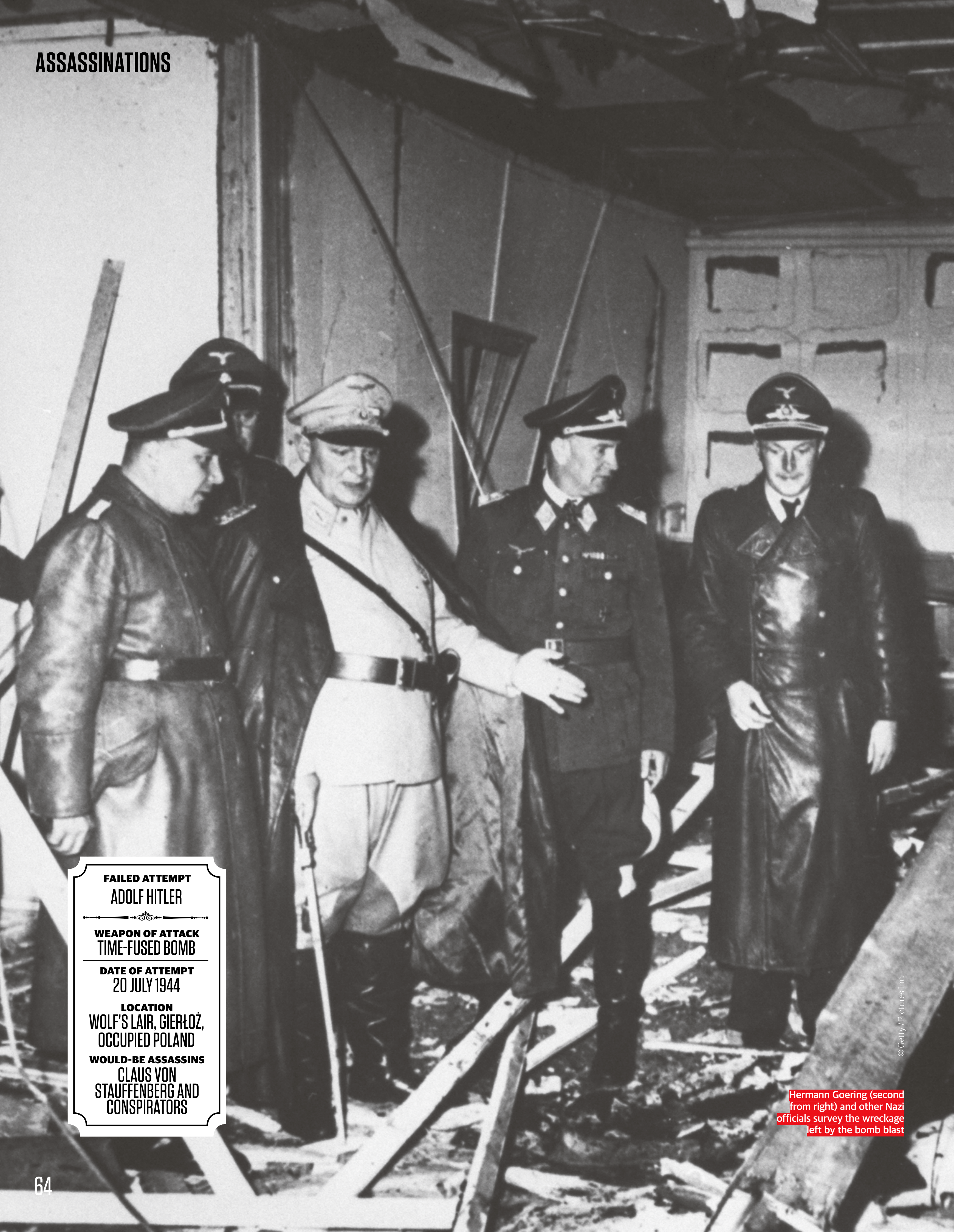

FAILED ATTEMPT
ADOLF HITLER

WEAPON OF ATTACK
TIME-FUSED BOMB

DATE OF ATTEMPT
20 JULY 1944

LOCATION
WOLF'S LAIR, GIERŁOŻ, OCCUPIED POLAND

WOULD-BE ASSASSINS
CLAUS VON STAUFFENBERG AND CONSPIRATORS

Hermann Goering (second from right) and other Nazi officials survey the wreckage left by the bomb blast

© Getty / Pictures Inc.

THE PLOT TO KILL HITLER

How a group of conspirators made a daring attempt to change the course of the war by taking aim at the very top of the Reich

Written by Tim Williamson

It was a hot afternoon in East Prussia, and Erich Fellgiebel, chief of signals for the high command of the German armed forces, was nervously glancing out of his office window. Across the compound, in a wooden barracks, Hitler was holding a military briefing with his generals – news from the war in the east, as usual, was bad. Outside, the unmistakable figure of Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg leapt into a car, waving the driver on with his one remaining hand.

Suddenly, the hut exploded in an eruption of flame and smoke. The blast echoed around the forest – it was as though an artillery shell had made a direct hit. Debris and bodies littered the ground around the smoking wreck of the building. Von Stauffenberg's car sped away through the main gate as shouts and alarms filled the air. Within minutes, Fellgiebel put in a call to the War Ministry in Berlin. "The bomb has exploded. Hitler is dead." The date was 20 July 1944, and a plot to overthrow the Führer was underway.

The 20 July Plot was an attempted military coup to overthrow the Nazi regime and broker a peace with the Allies in the west. Chief among the plot's objectives was to assassinate Adolf Hitler, after which the conspirators would be able to consolidate power, disarming the SS – the loyal military wing of the Nazi Party – and install a new government.

By the middle of 1944, the fortunes of war were firmly turning against Nazi Germany. In France, Operation Overlord had successfully penetrated Hitler's Atlantic Wall, establishing a foothold for the Allies and opening up a new front. Weeks later, Operation Bagration was launched in Belorussia, seeing over a million Soviets bear down on the outnumbered German Army Group Centre. To many in the higher echelons of the Wehrmacht, and those least committed to the Nazis, defeat in the face of these odds not only seemed likely, but inevitable. These critics and opponents of Hitler's policies felt something must be done to save Germany from destruction.

Several of the prominent members of the 20 July Plot had served on the Eastern Front, where they had witnessed repeated German defeats, as well as widespread atrocities committed on the

THE CONSPIRATORS

Who were the men who plotted to assassinate the Third Reich's Führer?

CLAUS VON STAUFFENBERG

A career officer from an aristocratic Bavarian family, von Stauffenberg joined the army at the age of 19 and by 1944 he had served on the Eastern Front during Operation Barbarossa and in North Africa. While serving in Tunisia he lost his left eye and right hand when an Allied aircraft strafed his vehicle.

HENNING VON TRESCKOW

A veteran of the First World War, von Tresckow served as a staff officer during the invasion of Poland in 1939 and was assigned to Army Group Centre during the 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union. It was while serving on the Eastern Front that he began conspiring against the Nazi leadership.

LUDWIG BECK

A high-ranking opponent of Nazi foreign policy during the 1930s, Beck was forced to retire his command before the outbreak of the Second World War. He remained an opponent of the Nazi regime and was involved in several other attempted coups before the 1944 assassination plot.

ERICH FELLGIEBEL

A high-ranking opponent of the Nazis and head of signals for the high command of the Wehrmacht, Fellgiebel was crucial to the plotters' attempts to cut off all communications with the Wolf's Lair on 20 July. Once his part in the plot was revealed, he was arrested and later executed.

WERNER VON HAEFTEN

Assigned to the Replacement Army staff after being wounded on the Eastern Front, von Haeften served as von Stauffenberg's adjutant from November 1943. He played a key role in the plot, assisting with the final preparations and escaping to Berlin with von Stauffenberg to begin the failed coup.

FRIEDRICH OLBRICHT

A recipient of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross during the invasion of Poland, Olbricht was later promoted to chief of the armed forces office, and was tasked with creating the Valkyrie protocol, which would eventually be utilised during the 20 July Plot to assassinate Hitler.

ALBRECHT MERTZ VON QUIRNHEIM

An old friend of Claus von Stauffenberg, with whom he trained to be an officer, von Quirnheim served on the Eastern Front before being reassigned to the Replacement Army, where he served as General Olbricht's Chief of Staff.

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Roland Freisler (centre) President of the People's Court, which tried several of the plotters

highest orders. For General Henning von Tresckow, it was reportedly after he witnessed the summary execution of captured Soviet troops in 1941 that he turned against the callous Nazi regime. From 1942 he organised several failed plans to kill Hitler, before recruiting Claus von Stauffenberg, an aristocratic officer who had become disillusioned by the regime after the capitulation of the Sixth Army at Stalingrad. He soon became acquainted with the network of like-minded officers who sought regime change.

After serving on the Eastern Front, von Stauffenberg fought in North Africa, and was terribly wounded during an air raid, losing his left eye, his right hand, as well as two digits on his left hand. Once fit for duty, he was stationed in the War Ministry in Berlin, in a building named the Bendlerblock, on the staff of Friedrich Fromm, general of the Replacement (or Reserve) Army. Here, von Stauffenberg worked with his superior and fellow conspirator, Friedrich Olbricht, and Tresckow on 'Operation Valkyrie'. This was a contingency plan to be used in the event of an uprising against the state. Once activated with the code word, Replacement Army soldiers would be ordered to secure government buildings. Ironically, the plotters intended to use the protocols of Valkyrie as part of their own coup to seize power.

For the plot to succeed however, Hitler had to be assassinated. That July the Führer would be at his headquarters in East Prussia, code-named the Wolf's Lair, situated in a vast forest near the town of Rastenburg. The plan was for a bomb to be smuggled onto the base, and detonated close enough to kill the Führer. For the task, two kilograms of explosives, packed into a metal casing, were carefully concealed within a briefcase. The ten-minute fuse would be activated by breaking a small capsule of acid, gradually corroding a metal strip. Once removed, the strip would release the firing pin, setting off the bomb. Von Stauffenberg agreed to travel to the Wolf's Lair and plant the device.

> "For the plot to succeed however, Hitler had to be assassinated. That July the Führer would be at his headquarters in East Prussia, code-named the Wolf's Lair"

On the morning of 20 July, von Stauffenberg and his adjutant Werner von Haeften flew to East Prussia and were met by a car to take them to Hitler's headquarters. Von Stauffenberg's car wound its way through the forest road and was waved through checkpoints without searches. During the journey, the colonel became concerned that the heavy briefcase might arouse suspicion from guards, so decided to deposit part of the explosives in the back seat of the vehicle. Upon arrival he was greeted by Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, who informed him that the meeting had been brought forward, and would not be held in the underground bunker, as the conspirators had expected. It was a hot summer's day and the generals and staff officers that were gathered for the military briefing were crowded in wooden barracks, surrounding a large wooden table strewn with maps and dismal reports from the Eastern Front.

Von Stauffenberg would have realised what this change in location could mean for the success of his mission. From within the strong underground concrete bunker, a bomb blast would be contained and obliterate everything within the room. The weaker structure of the wooden barracks, on the other hand, would allow much of the force of the blast to escape, making it far less deadly.

Nonetheless, von Stauffenberg continued as planned. Before planting the bomb, he had to prime it by breaking an acid capsule in the device, which would trigger the fuse. Excusing himself to change his shirt before joining the meeting, he carefully opened the briefcase in which the bomb was concealed, and used pliers to prime it for detonation. Then, at 12.20pm Keitel escorted von Stauffenberg to the briefing, which had promptly commenced 20 minutes earlier.

After entering the barracks, the two men found Hitler wrestling with bad news from the frontline in Romania, where Soviet forces had firmly gained the upper hand. After briefly returning the colonel's Sieg Heil, he returned to the generals' reports. Minutes later, von Stauffenberg excused himself to make an urgent phone call to Berlin. After depositing his briefcase beneath the wooden table, as close to Hitler as possible, he made a quick exit, striding to the communications post, commanded by fellow conspirator General Erich Fellgiebel.

Unknown to von Stauffenberg, however, after leaving the briefing, an officer standing close by to Hitler, Colonel Heinz Brandt, repositioned the briefcase further away from the Führer. Minutes later, at 12.42pm, the device detonated. The blast shredded the table into splinters. Bodies were flung through windows. Smoke and agonised cries for help filled what was left of the conference room. Slowly rising to his feet, Field Marshal Keitel found himself miraculously unharmed. "Where is the Führer?!" he cried.

At the moment the bomb detonated, von Stauffenberg and von Haeften reached their car and made their escape. Despite the chaos unfolding at the Wolf's Lair, the checkpoint guards allowed the car to pass unhindered – von Stauffenberg's rank as well as his significant war wounds were enough to get him through. As they passed speeding ambulances on the road away from the compound, von Stauffenberg was convinced that his mission had been a success. He sped back to his waiting plane and departed for Berlin.

At 1pm, General Fellgiebel at the Wolf's Lair made the crucial call that his fellow conspirators in Berlin had been waiting for. "The bomb has exploded," he reported. Immediately Olbricht and Beck approached General Friedrich Fromm, commander of the Replacement Army which was based in the capital. The conspirators needed Fromm to mobilise the Replacement Army, as part of Operation Valkyrie, in order to take control of the government, place high-ranking Nazi officials under arrest and to disarm the SS. However, Fromm mistrusted Olbricht's report that Hitler was indeed dead. Fromm telephoned Keitel at the Wolf's Lair, who confirmed that the Führer was, in fact, very much alive.

> "Despite the chaos unfolding at the Wolf's Lair, the checkpoint guards allowed the car to pass unhindered – von Stauffenberg's rank was enough to get him through"

Despite Fromm's refusal to sign the order declaring martial law, Colonel Albrecht Mertz von Quirnheim, Olbricht's chief of staff, nonetheless sent orders out to Wehrmacht commanders, announcing a state of emergency and that units were to follow the directives of Operation Valkyrie. Government buildings were ordered to be secured by military cordons, and Nazi officials arrested if necessary. However, many officers involved in these actions were not aware of the plot, and some became suspicious.

When von Stauffenberg arrived at the Bendlerblock headquarters at around 4-4.30pm, he found Olbricht and Beck had stalled – conflicting rumours of Hitler's death or survival had spread through the capital, casting doubt in the minds of some plotters. However, taking charge of events at the Bendlerblock, von Stauffenberg continued to insist that Hitler was dead, and that Keitel was trying to conceal this with contrary reports. When Fromm tried to arrest the conspirators, he himself was placed under guard in the Bendlerblock.

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After the Valkyrie order was given, Major Otto Ernst Remer, of the Grossdeutschland Infantry Regiment, part of the Replacement Army, was ordered to take control of the SS barracks and government buildings. The major was informed that an attempt had been made on Hitler's life, and that it was unclear whether he was dead or alive. Remer was not involved with the conspiracy, and

Operation Valkyrie *20 July 1944*

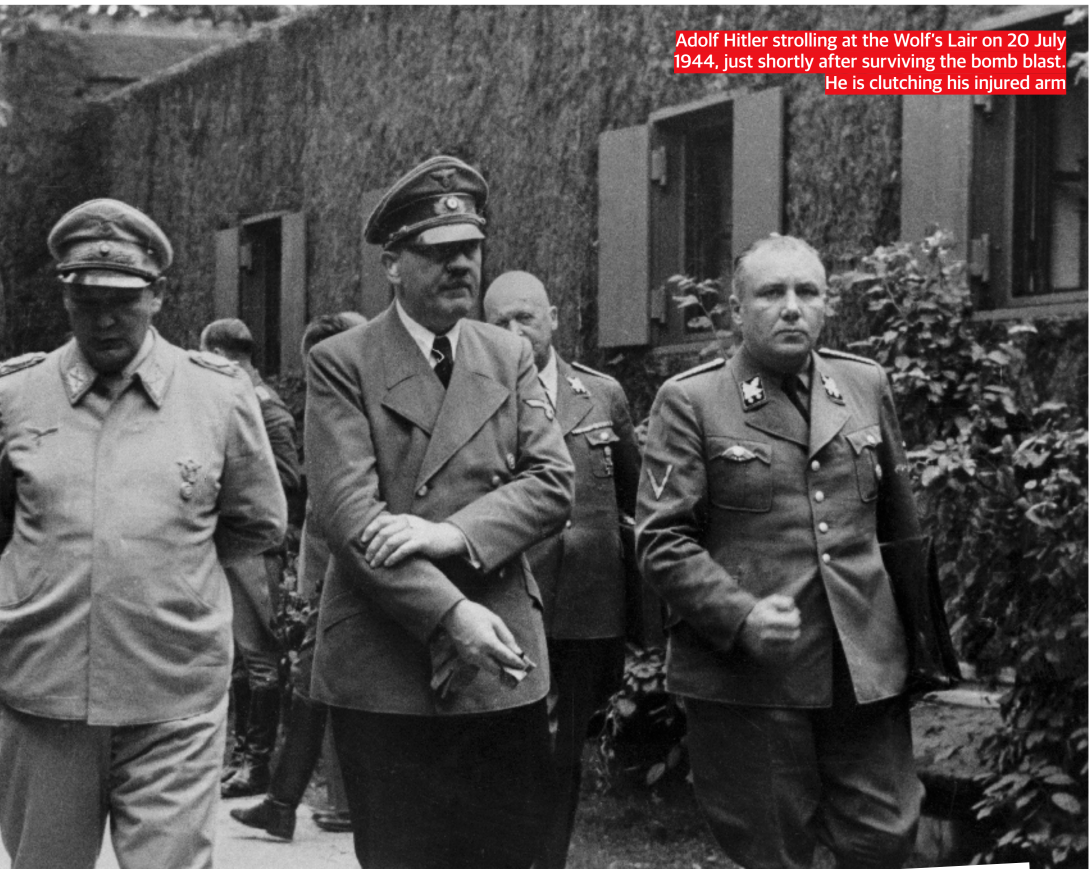
10.15am
Von Stauffenberg and von Haeften arrive in East Prussia by plane, with the bomb concealed in a briefcase. They make their way to the Wolf's Lair and the meeting with Hitler.

12.42pm
The bomb concealed in von Stauffenberg's briefcase detonates, mortally wounding four and severely wounding many more – Hitler is only lightly wounded.

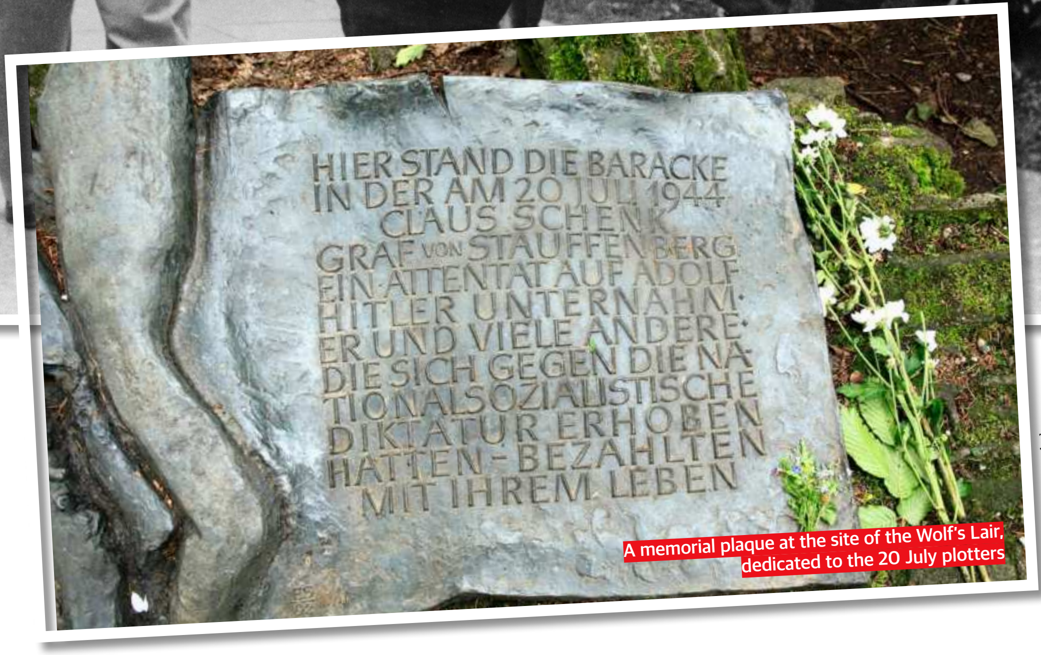
Hitler and Mussolini inspect the damage caused by the bomb

1.15pm
Von Stauffenberg and his adjutant board a plane to Berlin, phoning ahead to confirm Operation Valkyrie should begin.

4-5pm
After arriving in the capital, von Stauffenberg finds no progress in the operation, and immediately orders Replacement Army troops to secure key government buildings in Berlin.



Adolf Hitler strolling at the Wolf's Lair on 20 July 1944, just shortly after surviving the bomb blast. He is clutching his injured arm



A memorial plaque at the site of the Wolf's Lair, dedicated to the 20 July plotters

© Alamy / Andreas Keuchel

was unaware that he was taking part in a coup against the Nazi regime. In revealing interviews after the war, Remer claimed to have become suspicious of his superiors and their orders, though duty bound him to obey. His suspicions grew further when he overheard an order to arrest Joseph Goebbels, the minister for propaganda. Determined to find answers for himself, Remer decided to speak with Goebbels. Entering the minister's office, Remer delivered his orders to arrest him. Unflinching, Goebbels not only assured the officer that Hitler was still alive, he put a call directly to the Wolf's Lair and handed over the receiver.

"Major Remer, can you hear me, do you recognise my voice?" Remer instantly stood to attention, replying that he did. "As you can tell I'm alive. A clique of lawless, faithless officers have made an attempt on my life, but I am unharmed. I order you to crush this rebellion by any means necessary. You will take your orders from no-one but me - your authority is absolute. You must safeguard Berlin for me. Use all necessary force - shoot anyone refusing to follow your orders. Do you understand?"

"Yes, my Führer," Remer replied.

Despite over a dozen officers being seriously wounded in the blast at the Wolf's Lair just hours earlier, Hitler had indeed escaped with only minor injuries. Generals Rudolf Schmundt and Günther Korten, Colonel Brandt and a stenographer named Berger had all received mortal wounds in the explosion - all of them had been no more than a metre away from the assassin's target. Hitler immediately claimed his survival was due to divine providence. Historians now believe that by moving the briefcase further to the end of the table, Colonel Brandt saved Hitler's life and doomed himself.

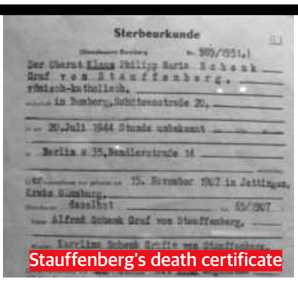
That very afternoon, Hitler had even kept a scheduled meeting with Italian leader Benito Mussolini, who he showed around the ruined barracks to demonstrate his close shave with death - and also his supposed divine protection.

Back in Goebbel's office, Remer's mission had now changed. He realised that the officers whose orders he had been following were actually enemies of the Third Reich. He gathered his men together and soon departed for the Bendlerblock to apprehend the conspirators.

Meanwhile, across the city, the plotters were still desperately trying to gather support and defeat the growing rumours that Hitler was in fact alive. At

6pm
General Beck continues to contact army field marshals across the Reich, attempting to secure their support for the coup.

6.30pm
A radio broadcast in Berlin announces that an attempt has been made on Hitler's life, but the Führer is still alive.



Sterbeurkunde

Stauffenberg's death certificate

9-10.30pm
Soldiers surround the conspirators' headquarters at Bendlerstrasse and a brief firefight breaks out before von Stauffenberg and his men are forced to surrender.

21 July, 12.30am
Olbricht, von Stauffenberg, Mertz von Quirnheim and Haeften are shot by a firing squad, on the orders of General Fromm.

around 6.30pm, a radio broadcast had been made, declaring that Hitler had survived an assassination attempt and that a number of traitors were working to overthrow the regime and should be stopped. Von Stauffenberg, Beck and Olbricht were busy declaring that this broadcast was merely a trick by Goebbels to deceive the population. They were desperately calling around the other occupied territories of the Third Reich, activating Operation Valkyrie across Europe.

By the late evening Remer's men had returned, this time to surround the Bendlerblock and arrest its occupants. Shots were fired as Remer's soldiers surrounded the building, penning the conspirators inside. One shot grazed von Stauffenberg's shoulder as he returned fire. Now just over three dozen remained. Olbricht and von Stauffenberg prepared those loyal to the coup to defend the Bendlerblock. "We are going to remain here and defend ourselves," Olbricht declared. "I intend to die a soldier's death."

The last stand of the would-be saviours of Germany was short lived. At approximately 10.30pm, Remer's men were relieved by SS troops, who were now back in control of the capital. For several of the less zealous among the conspirators, this was more than a bad omen - the cause was well and truly lost. Two of Olbricht's staff officers, deciding to change their allegiance and perhaps save themselves, freed General Fromm from his improvised office cell. The group then gathered weapons to confront the ringleaders.

Now armed with pistols, Fromm and his new allies burst into the room where Beck and the other leaders were gathered. "You are all guilty of treason and deserve to die..." Fromm bellowed. "Put down your weapons." The struggle was finally over.

Resolved to not be taken alive, Beck requested a pistol to take his own life with dignity. Fromm agreed. The old officer picked up a gun, placed it to his head and fired. Tragically, the bullet only grazed the top of Beck's skull, and he fell, barely conscious. Fromm then turned to the remaining officers and declared they should begin writing their final letters. Although Hitler had commanded that the leaders of the coup be taken alive, Fromm had quickly decided their fate. Later, another officer would have to perform a coup-de-grace on the unfortunate Beck.

Von Stauffenberg, Olbricht, von Quirnheim and von Haeften were led outside into the courtyard, illuminated by the headlights of a waiting vehicle. The hastily assembled firing squad dispatched each of the officers in turn - some accounts describe von Haeften stepping out in front of von Stauffenberg, taking the bullets intended for his boss. Next, von Stauffenberg was shot, crying out, "Long live sacred Germany!" before falling lifeless to the floor. The bodies were taken away by a truck, and quickly buried. At around 1am the next morning, Hitler, Admiral Dönitz and Hermann Goering all made radio broadcasts, denouncing the traitors.

There is no doubt Fromm's decision to swiftly execute the ringleaders spared the four men from agonising torture and suffering at the hands of the Gestapo - but it was not enough to conceal his involvement in the plot, as he had intended. Two days later he was arrested and thrown into prison,

INSIDE THE WOLF'S LAIR

Stauffenberg's briefcase bomb came inches away from killing Hitler, but others were caught in the blast

KEY

🔴 KILLED
🟠 SERIOUSLY INJURED
⚪ SLIGHTLY INJURED
◌ LOCATION OF BOMB

01 - ADOLF HITLER

02 - ADOLF HEUSINGER
Chief of the Army General Staff

03 - GÜNTHER KORTEN
Chief of the Luftwaffe General Staff

04 - HEINZ BRANDT
Aide to General Heusinger

05 - KARL BODENSCHATZ
Liaison Officer for Göring and Hitler

06 - HEINZ WAIZENEGGER
General Staff Officer for Jodl

07 - RUDOLF SCHMUNDT
Chief Aide of the Wehrmacht

08 - HEINRICH BORGMANN
Army Adjutant to Hitler

09 - WALTHER BUHLE
Chief of the Army Staff of Wehrmacht High Command

10 - KARL-JESKO VON PUTTKAMER
Naval Adjutant to Hitler

11 - HEINRICH BERGER
Stenographer

12 - HEINZ AßMANN
Staff Officer

13 - ERNST JOHN VON FREYEND
Adjutant to Keitel

14 - WALTER SCHERFF
Military Historian

15 - HANS-ERICH VOß
Liaison Officer

16 - OTTO GÜNSCHE
SS Adjutant and Bodyguard to Hitler

17 - NICOLAUS VON BELOW
Luftwaffe Adjutant to Hitler

18 - HERMANN FEGELEIN
SS Group Leader

19 - HEINZ BUCHHOLZ
Stenographer

20 - HERBERT BÜCHS
Adjutant to Jodl

21 - FRANZ VON SONNLEITHNER
Foreign Ministry representative

22 - WALTER WARLIMONT
Deputy Chief of Staff of Wehrmacht High Command

23 - ALFRED JODL
Chief of Staff of Wehrmacht High Command

24 - WILHELM KEITEL
Chief of Wehrmacht High Command

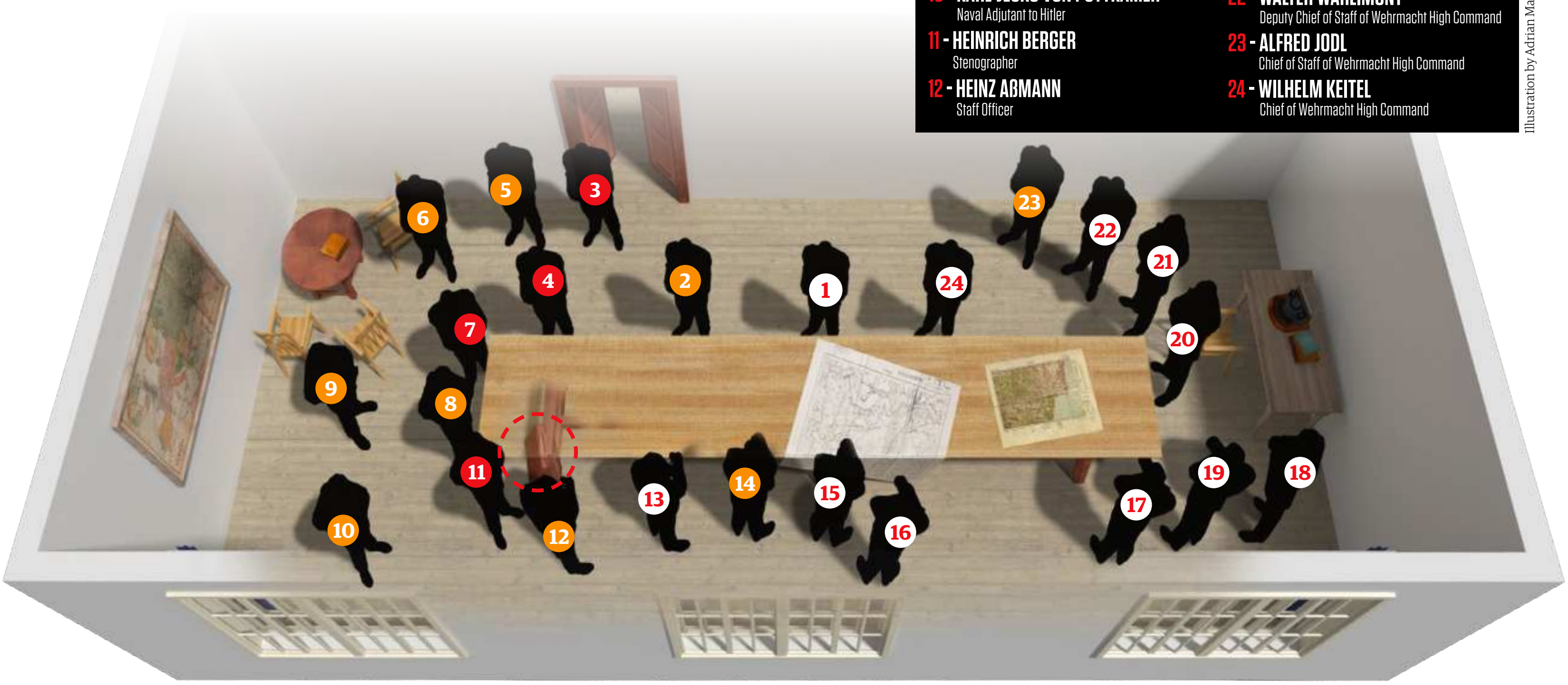


Illustration by Adrian Mann

Field Marshal Witzleben is placed in the dock of the 'People's Court' for his part in the plot

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Claus von Stauffenberg with his children while on convalescent leave

© Getty / ullstein bild Dtl.

where he would languish until just before the end of the war. He was executed by firing squad on 19 March 1945.

Over the following weeks and months, the Gestapo rounded up and arrested anyone suspected of being involved in the plot. Thousands of arrests were made. Many chose to take their own lives rather than risk betraying their comrades under torture. Among those making this difficult choice was Henning von Tresckow, who, after learning of the failure in Berlin, drove out into a forest and blew his own head off with a grenade.

Enraged by the attempt on his life, Hitler not only sought to bring his enemies to justice, he wanted brutal retribution. On 8 August, eight conspirators were executed at Plötzensee Prison in Berlin. Among them was Erwin von Witzleben, the only field marshal who had thrown his support behind the coup. One by one, the prisoners were each led from their cells, stripped naked, and a slipknot of hemp wire was slung around their necks, from which they were hanged on suspended meathooks. The entire process was filmed and photographed, at Hitler's request.

Even the family members of the conspirators were targeted for arrest. Several of Claus von Stauffenberg's relatives were detained, including his wife and mother-in-law. Although his brother Berthold and cousin Cäsar von Hofacker had indeed been key members of the coup, most were entirely innocent of any involvement.

Hofacker had, in fact, acted as a go-between for the conspirators in Berlin and Paris, relaying information and orders to direct the coup in France. In Paris, well over 1,000 SS and SD troops had been successfully rounded up and arrested by the end of the day on 20 July – a far more organised outcome than in the German capital. The Gestapo tortured Hofacker repeatedly for information after his arrest. Eventually, he gave the name 'Erwin Rommel'. Even the celebrated 'Desert Fox' did not escape Hitler's wrath, and the field marshal was forced to commit suicide with a cyanide capsule.

After he was sentenced to death by a People's Court, Hofacker warned the Nazi judge: "Today it's my neck on the block – but in a year's time it will be yours." His threat would prove ominous – the Nuremberg Trials for Nazi war crimes began on 20 November 1945.

Although the 20 July Plot ended in tragic failure, its members are today remembered among the many German resistance fighters, who sought to overthrow the Nazi regime. The courtyard of the Bendlerblock is now a memorial to the plotters, and the street outside is renamed Stauffenbergstrasse in honour of the man who almost assassinated the 20th-century's most reviled dictator.

"The whole world will vilify us now, but I am still totally convinced that we did the right thing," declared von Tresckow, before ending his own life. "Hitler is the archenemy not only of Germany but of the world."

KILLING HITLER

The 20 July plot was one of many failed attempts to assassinate the Führer

THE BEER HALL BLAST, 8 NOVEMBER 1939

A huge crowd of prominent Nazi officials and supporters gathered at the Bürgerbräukeller, in Munich, to hear Hitler give a speech at the annual commemoration of the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923. A time-fused bomb planted in the stage detonated, but Hitler had already left, escaping the blast by minutes. The blast killed and injured scores of people and crushed the podium where Hitler had just been speaking minutes earlier.

THE EXPLOSIVE BRANDY, 13 MARCH 1943

In 1943 Hitler made a fleeting visit to Henning von Tresckow's Eastern Front headquarters, flying in with a small number of staff. Tresckow managed to conceal a bomb, with a 30-minute fuse, within a package purporting to be bottles of cognac – he passed this to an unwitting member of Hitler's staff. Though the bomb was taken on board the plane, the detonator failed to trigger. Tresckow later was forced to retrieve the package before its incriminating contents could be discovered.

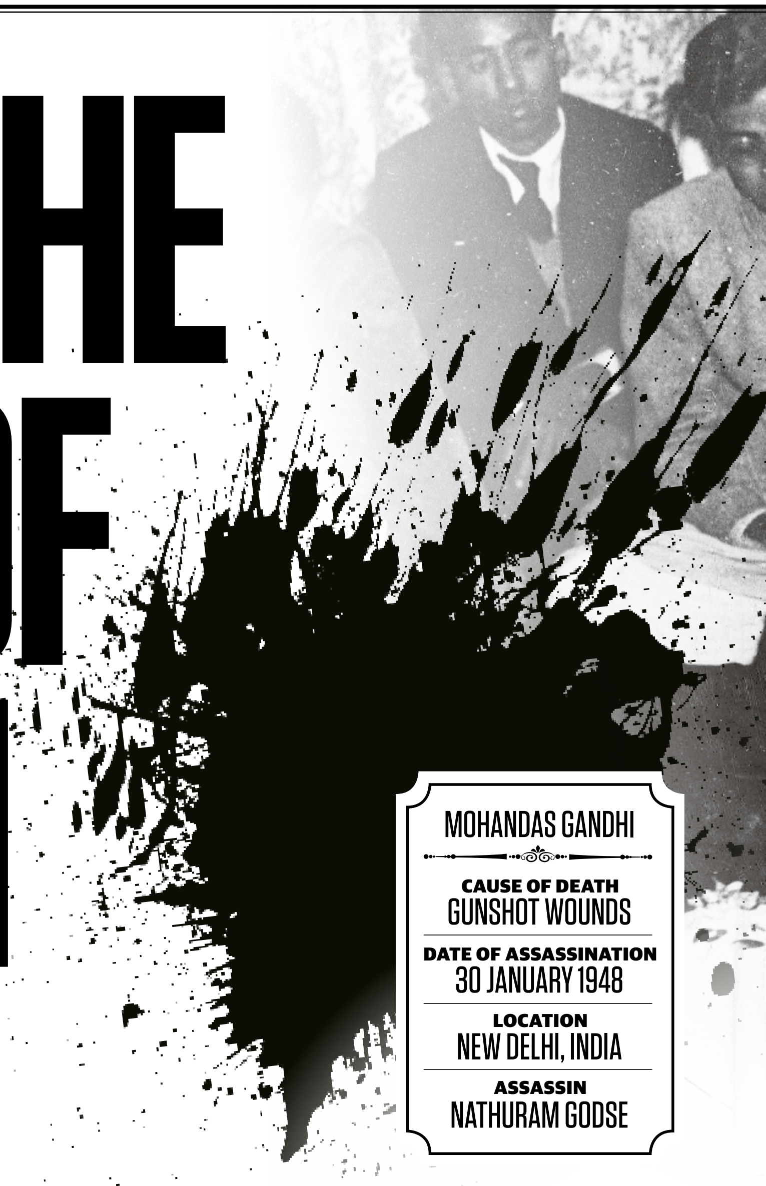
THE SUICIDE BOMBER, 21 MARCH 1943

Henning von Tresckow found another opportunity at a military exhibition of captured Soviet flags and equipment. Hitler would be attending in person, and General Rudolf von Gersdorff was expecting to escort him around in person. The general was persuaded to conceal a bomb in his coat, which he would then detonate, sacrificing himself to kill Hitler in the blast. On the day, Hitler unexpectedly rushed through the exhibition and departed, leaving Gersdorff to hastily halt the ten-minute fuse.

Hitler gave his speech at the commemoration and escaped death in the subsequent blast by minutes

© Getty / Print Collector

FALL OF THE FATHER OF A NATION



How the champion of peaceful protest met a violent end

Written by Adam Millward

The evening of 30 January 1948 was like any other at Birla House in New Delhi - no different from the dozens that had preceded it since becoming the official residence of India's 'Bapu' ('Father').

Supported by two of his grand-nieces, the 78-year-old Mohandas Gandhi was wearing his trademark white khadi shawl and dhoti as he made his way to conduct his daily multi-faith prayer ceremony. As ever, the lawns were packed. The atmosphere was electric with excited anticipation as people strained to catch a glimpse of the Mahatma ('Great Soul').

Even when a man in a khaki jacket emerged from the crowd, no alarm bells were raised. He was bent low, reaching to touch Gandhi's feet and offering the 'namaste' greeting - both gestures of respect. Having secured a long-fought-for independence from Britain less than six months ago, the presence of over-zealous fans wishing to express their gratitude were hardly a cause for concern. Gandhi smiled on benevolently as his nieces encouraged the man to move aside so they could get on with evening prayers. They were already running late.

But then all normalcy was shattered as the stranger rose up and withdrew a 38-calibre Biretta. Before anyone could react, three shots had been fired at point-blank range, all striking their intended target. The fallen national hero was rushed back into Birla House where attempts were made to staunch the blood loss, but they knew they were losing him. Within half an hour, the man who had clung unflinchingly to non-violent resistance had succumbed to violence.

Outside, the assassin - Hindu extremist Nathuram Godse - had been bundled into custody. His survival that day wasn't expected - least of all by Godse, who had turned the pistol on himself immediately after the shooting. Even when the weapon had been wrestled out of his grasp by an off-duty air force sergeant, the incensed mob of devotees would most likely have exacted their own justice if the police hadn't removed him as swiftly as they had.

The hunger for retribution, however, did not disperse. For weeks to come, riots, arson and property damage shook cities across India. It was primarily targeted at Brahmins - the caste of Hindus to which Godse belonged. The scenes playing out in his name could not have been any further from Gandhian teachings.

The assassin himself would have to wait months to learn of his fate. His trial began in June 1948, with his death sentence pronounced in February the following year. It did mean that Godse had his moment in court to express his motivation, though the speech was suppressed for many years for fear it could incite further violence.

Godse attributed his actions to Gandhi's 'pandering' to minorities at the expense of India's Hindu majority. His contempt for what he saw as the ruling party's obsequiousness was exemplified by the Partition - the 1947 split of the subcontinent into Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan, which was a key prerequisite to the British government relinquishing the territory. The division led to the displacement of millions, widespread civil unrest and religious massacres. Godse felt absolved because "...my shots were fired at the person whose policy and action have brought rack and ruin and destruction to millions of Hindus." Despite an appeal, Godse was eventually executed on 15 November 1949.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

CAUSE OF DEATH
GUNSHOT WOUNDS

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
30 JANUARY 1948

LOCATION
NEW DELHI, INDIA

ASSASSIN
NATHURAM GODSE

© Getty Images / Imagno

It's hard to comprehend how a man of the people who so famously expounded peace and unity could have inspired such hatred, but as Godse proved, not everyone agreed with Gandhi's means to secure independence, nor his vision for the future of India.

This wasn't the first attempt on his life (in fact, it wasn't even the first by Godse). Just ten days before the fatal attack, on the very same prayer-grounds of Birla House, a Hindu refugee from Pakistan had detonated a bomb but it failed to go off properly. Refusing to be cowed, Gandhi had persisted with the open-to-all gatherings. He had even commented with eerie prescience: "If I am to die by the bullet of a madman, I must do so smiling... God must be in my heart and on my lips." Ironically, while the immediate outcome of Godse's assassination attempt had been successful, the longer-term ramifications proved to be the undoing of not just Hindu nationalists, but virtually all forms of political opposition – for decades to come.

The Indian National Congress, led by Gandhi's close friend and colleague Jawaharlal Nehru, harnessed the surge of grief and anger across the country to consolidate his party's position. Extreme elements at both ends of the political and religious spectrum were snuffed out, with any dissenting views denounced as 'anti-Gandhian', leaving little oxygen for debate. Again, it's a legacy that does not sit easy with the pluralism that the Mahatma fervently advocated.

Interestingly, in recent years the pro-Gandhi agenda has begun to face a backlash. Indeed, there are certain factions of India's ruling right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party who are calling for Godse to be recognised as a patriot. Who would have ever thought that the assassin of one of history's most revered figures could be on the verge of being rebranded from villain to hero?

Martin Luther King Jr pays his respects at Gandhi's memorial in New Delhi, India, in January 1959

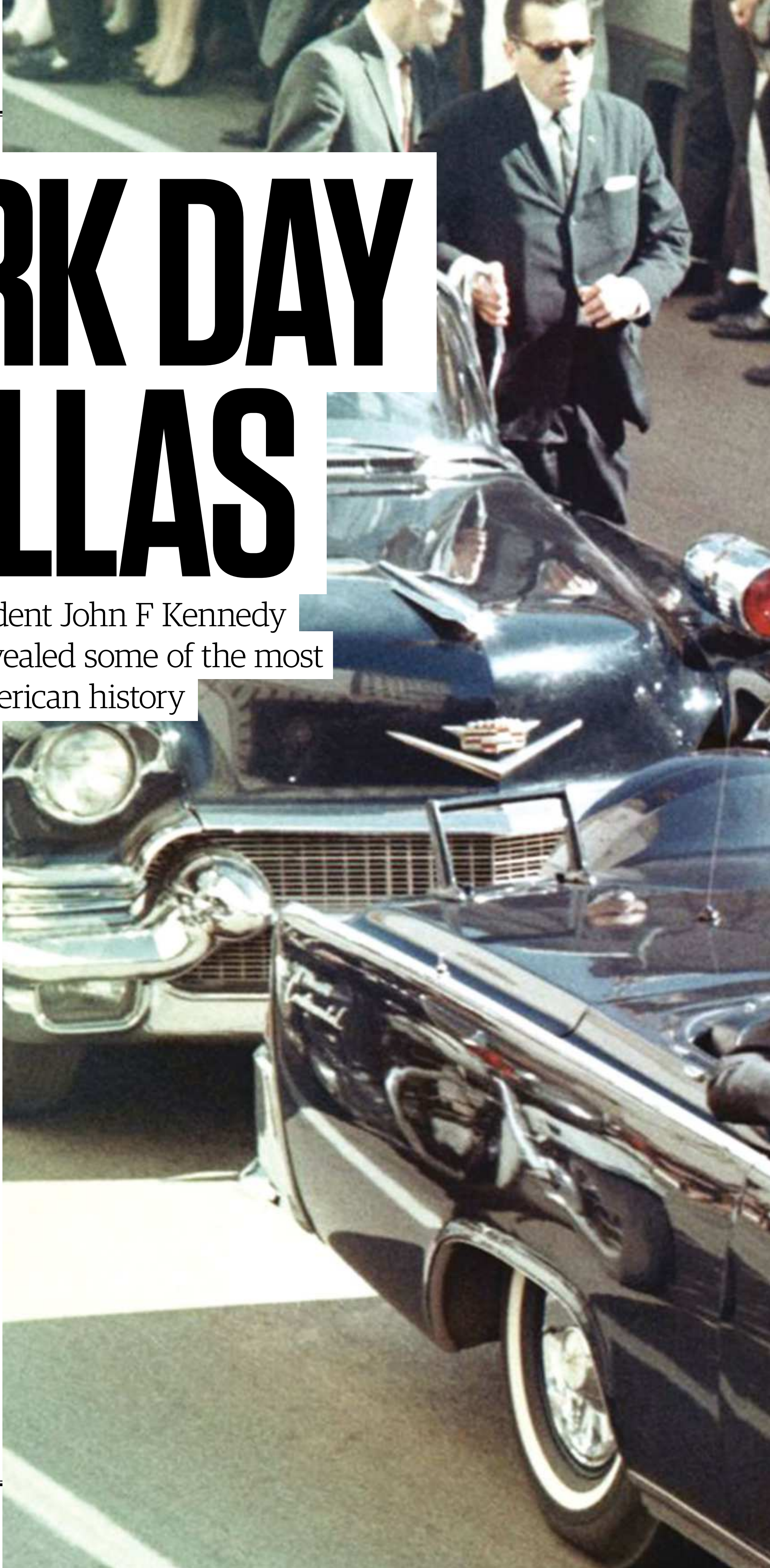
© Alamy Images

THE RISE OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE

While non-violent protest was not a novel concept, Gandhi took it to unprecedented levels the likes of which had never been seen on the world stage. His call for the Indian populace to embrace satyagraha ('truth force') to resist British rule was heeded by millions, and doubtlessly played a pivotal role towards India gaining its independence. Likewise, Gandhi's success inspired other oppressed groups to follow in his footsteps.

In his quest for civil rights in the USA, Martin Luther King Junior described the core tenets of compassion and passive resistance as "the method for social reform that I had been seeking". Sadly, two decades after Gandhi's death, King too would fall victim to a bullet, though unlike his hero, his assassin's motives remain steeped in intrigue and conspiracy (see page 84).

In South Africa, meanwhile – where as a young lawyer Gandhi had first begun to nurture his notion of satyagraha while campaigning for the rights of Asian citizens – anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela took a more adaptive approach to Gandhian philosophy. In his autobiography, Mandela wrote: "Nonviolent passive resistance is effective as long as your opposition adheres to the same rules as you do. But if peaceful protest is met with violence, its efficacy is at an end. For me, nonviolence was not a moral principle but a strategy."



A DARK DAY IN DALLAS

The assassination of President John F Kennedy shocked the world and revealed some of the most poignant moments in American history

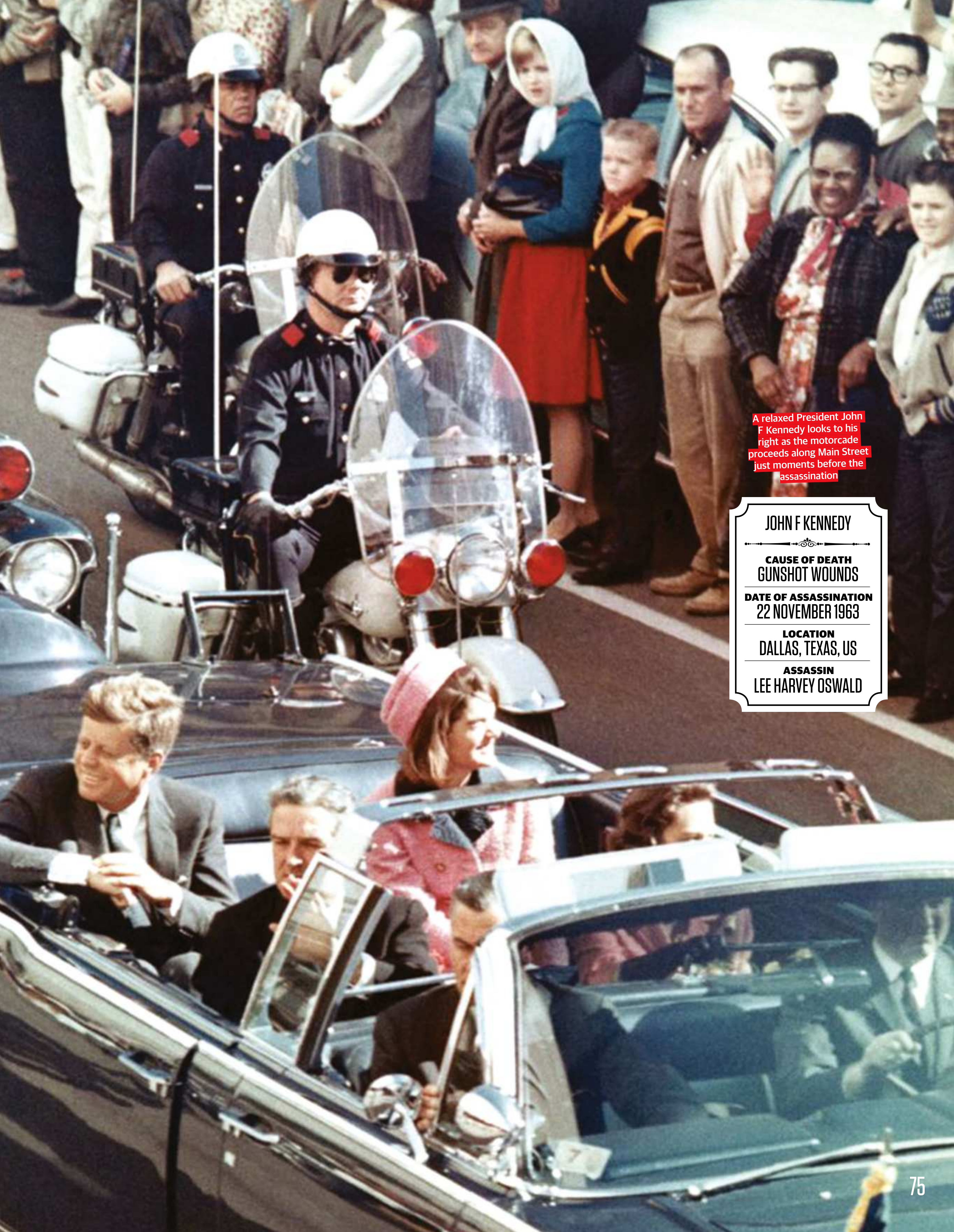
Written by Michael Haskew

On the morning of 22 November 1963, John F Kennedy, 35th president of the USA, smiled broadly and told the Chamber of Commerce in Fort Worth, Texas: "I am confident, as I look to the future, that our chances for security, our chances for peace, are better than they have been in the past." Within an hour, the 46-year-old chief executive was dead. That future of which he had spoken was shattered in seconds by an assassin's lethal bullet.

The murder of President John F Kennedy remains a watershed in American history, a defining moment in the fabric of the nation's growth, maturity and ascension to a leadership role in the wider world. Americans who were living at the time remember distinctly where they were and what they were doing when the news that the president had been shot flashed across the globe.

To this day, the impact of President Kennedy's assassination reverberates, exerting an unparalleled impact on the American psyche. Questions of conspiracy linger. Images of horror, grace and grief are indelible. The Kennedy presidency, outwardly one of hope, youthful vigour and captivating beauty - enough that it was called 'Camelot' - had come to an abrupt, blood-splattered end.

Kennedy had journeyed to Texas as a pragmatic politician. The election of 1964 was looming, and he was determined to heal a rift in the state's Democratic Party during a five-city swing that would be accomplished in just two days. Rich in Electoral College votes, Texas was vital if the chief executive intended to win a second term in office.



A relaxed President John F Kennedy looks to his right as the motorcade proceeds along Main Street just moments before the assassination

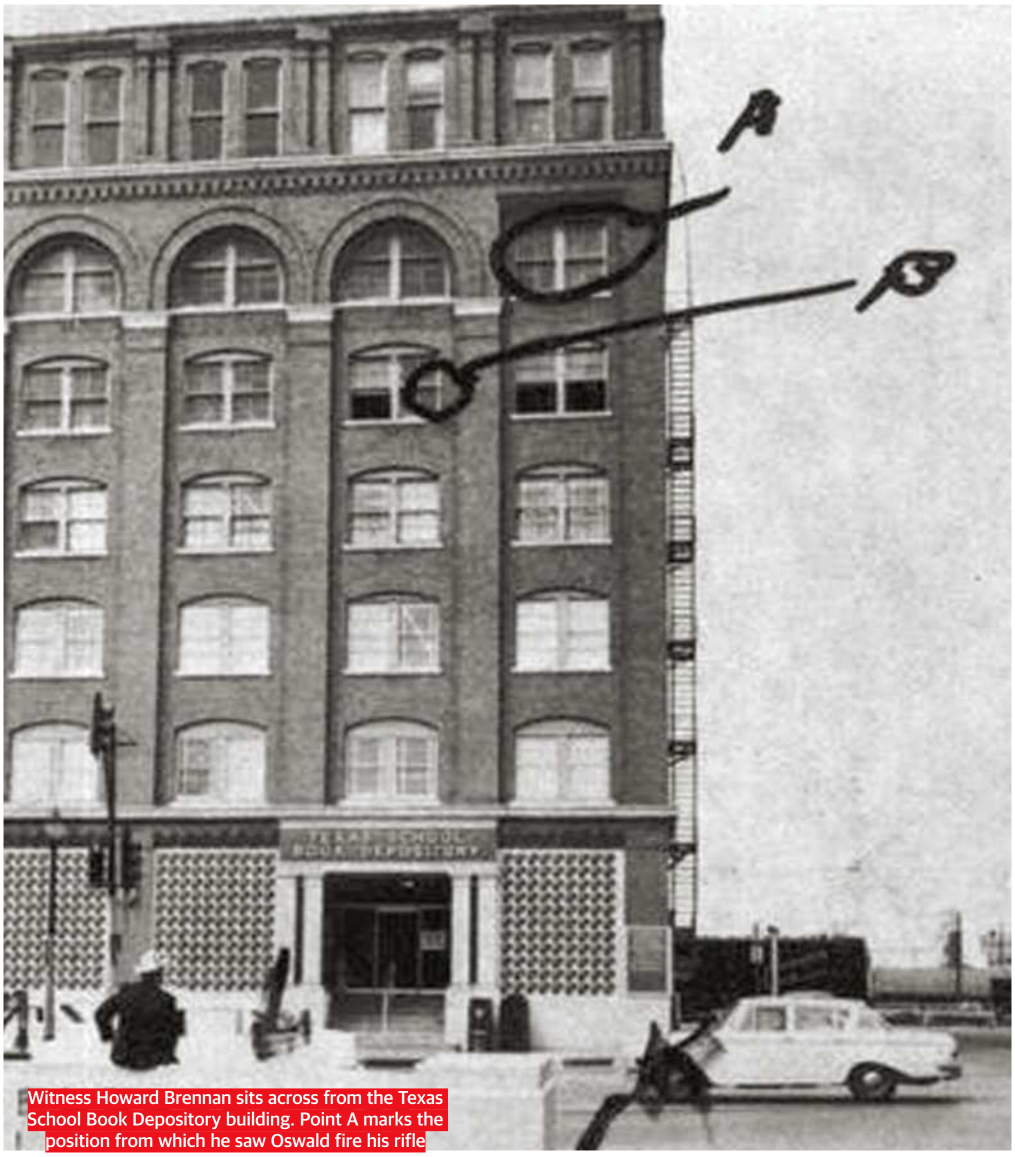
JOHN F KENNEDY

CAUSE OF DEATH
GUNSHOT WOUNDS

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
22 NOVEMBER 1963

LOCATION
DALLAS, TEXAS, US

ASSASSIN
LEE HARVEY OSWALD



Witness Howard Brennan sits across from the Texas School Book Depository building. Point A marks the position from which he saw Oswald fire his rifle

A light rain fell as Kennedy concluded his remarks in Fort Worth. Shortly afterwards, he was joined by his wife, Jacqueline, for the brief ride from the Hotel Texas to Carswell Air Force Base. The air hop to Dallas was only 13 minutes in duration, and by the time the First Couple touched down at Love Field, the rain had stopped. Texas governor John Connally and his wife, Nellie, were waiting in the limousine that would transport the group from the airport to the Trade Mart in Dallas for a highly anticipated speech to a packed, sold-out luncheon gathering. The protective bubble top had been removed from the vehicle, and the presidential party would make the ten-mile drive in an open car. When they stepped from Air Force One, the First Couple moved to a fence line, greeting and shaking hands with well wishers. The grinning president exuded an easy confidence. Mrs Kennedy, dressed in a pink Chanel suit trimmed in navy blue, received a bouquet of red roses.

The motorcade then proceeded along a somewhat circuitous route through a section of suburban Dallas to Main Street, turning right on Houston Street, then executing a sharp left onto Elm Street before entering Dealey Plaza and approaching the Stemmons Freeway near the triple underpass, where Elm, Commerce and Main Streets converged.

The trip to the Trade Mart was expected to take 45 minutes, but actually ran about ten minutes behind schedule. Large crowds lined the route. Although some signs of protest were seen, most of the spectators cheered wildly and welcomed the First Couple.

The motorcade entered Dealey Plaza at approximately 12.30pm, and Mrs Connally turned towards the back seat of the limousine and smiled. “Mr President, you can’t say Dallas doesn’t love you!” He replied: “No, you certainly can’t.” These may have been the president’s last words.

The seven-story Texas School Book Depository building, in the northwest corner of Dealey Plaza, loomed over the right shoulder of President Kennedy as the motorcade proceeded down Elm Street. Suddenly, shots rang out. The unthinkable had happened.

Witnesses later told conflicting accounts of the harrowing seconds, including the number of shots - three or four - and the single or multiple locations from which they had come. In the moment, however, President Kennedy was struck by a bullet that entered his upper back, nicked a cervical vertebra, and exited his throat below the larynx, slightly damaging the knot of his necktie. When he was struck, the president had been looking to his right and waving to the crowd with his right arm raised. Immediately, both elbows flew up, and with clenched fists the president slumped slightly forward. Almost immediately, another bullet impacted Kennedy’s head, shattering his skull and showering the other occupants of the limousine with blood, bone and brain matter.

Governor Connally was struck - either by another bullet or the same one that had hit the president initially. It entered his back just below the right armpit, broke three ribs (damaging ten centimetres of his right fifth rib), shattered the radius bone of his right wrist into eight fragments, exited his arm, and lodged in his left thigh.

> **“Another bullet impacted Kennedy’s head, shattering his skull”**

Connally was seriously wounded but survived the ordeal. A spectator, James Tague, was slightly injured in the cheek by a bullet or fragment that struck the curb along Main Street.

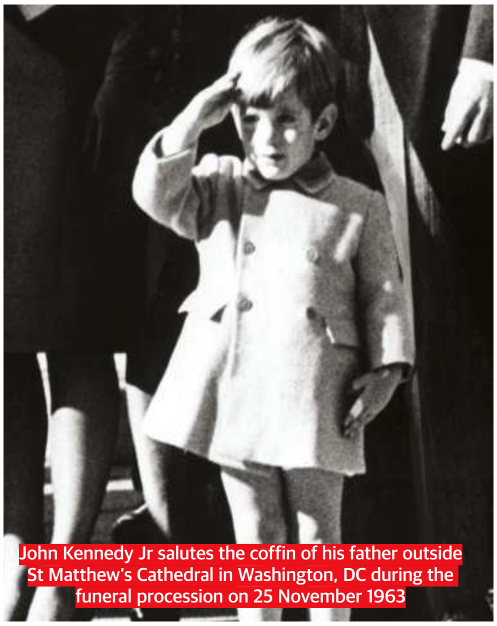
President Kennedy, meanwhile, had suffered a fatal gunshot wound. The famed Zapruder film reveals the terrible moment in stark colour footage. The president’s head snaps forcefully with the recoil from the lethal bullet’s impact, and Mrs Kennedy is seen reaching across the trunk of the limousine, either to retrieve a fragment of the president’s skull or to assist Secret Service agent Clint Hill in climbing into the vehicle. In a flash, the limousine speeds away towards Parkland Memorial Hospital.

Doctors Ronald Jones, Malcolm Perry and Kemp Clark, and other medical personnel attended the president at Parkland. Doctor Jones remembered that he reached the emergency room from the hospital cafeteria moments after the stricken president had arrived. Kennedy’s body lay motionless on a gurney in trauma room number one. His eyes were open, staring. No heartbeat was present. Two Roman Catholic priests were summoned to administer the last rights of the Church, and the president was pronounced dead.

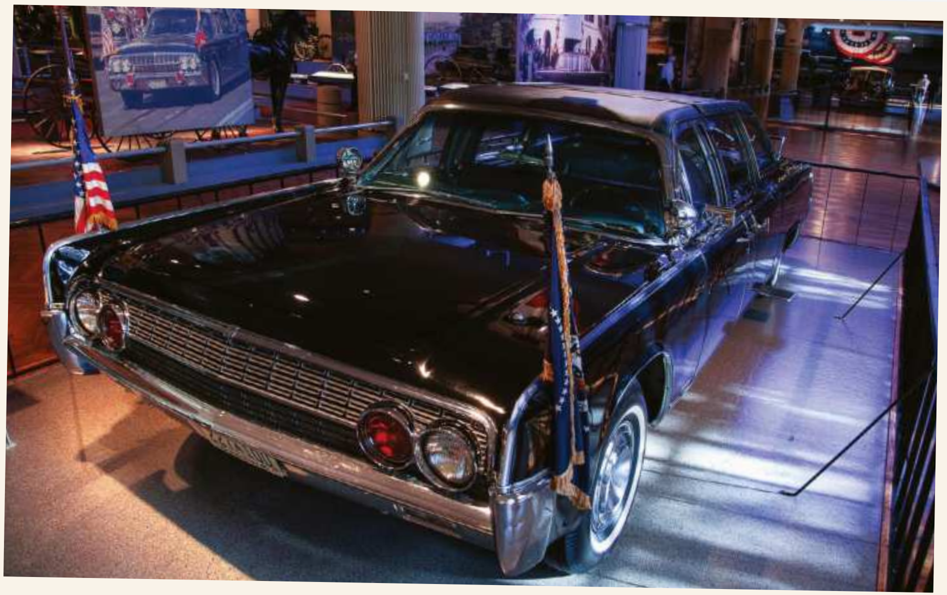
CBS News anchor Walter Cronkite, fondly regarded as the 'most trusted man in America', broke the news to the American people as regular midday programming was interrupted across the country. "From Dallas, Texas," intoned a visibly emotional Cronkite, "the flash apparently official… President Kennedy died at 1pm Central Standard Time, two o'clock Eastern Standard Time, some 38 minutes ago."

As news of the assassination spread rapidly across the globe, the macabre drama continued to unfold in Dallas. The deadly rifle shots were initially determined to have been fired from above and behind the president, and the logical line of sight stretched to the upper floors of the Depository building. Inspection of the sixth floor revealed a sniper's nest at its southeast corner. Boxes had been stacked, a window was open, and the murder weapon - a cheap 6.5mm Italian-made Carcano Model 1891/38 rifle - had been discarded among the jumble of half-empty boxes.

As law enforcement officers scoured the area in and around Dealey Plaza for clues, they sealed the exits from the Depository building. However,



John Kennedy Jr salutes the coffin of his father outside St Matthew's Cathedral in Washington, DC during the funeral procession on 25 November 1963



THE LINCOLN CONTINENTAL MUSEUM EXHIBIT

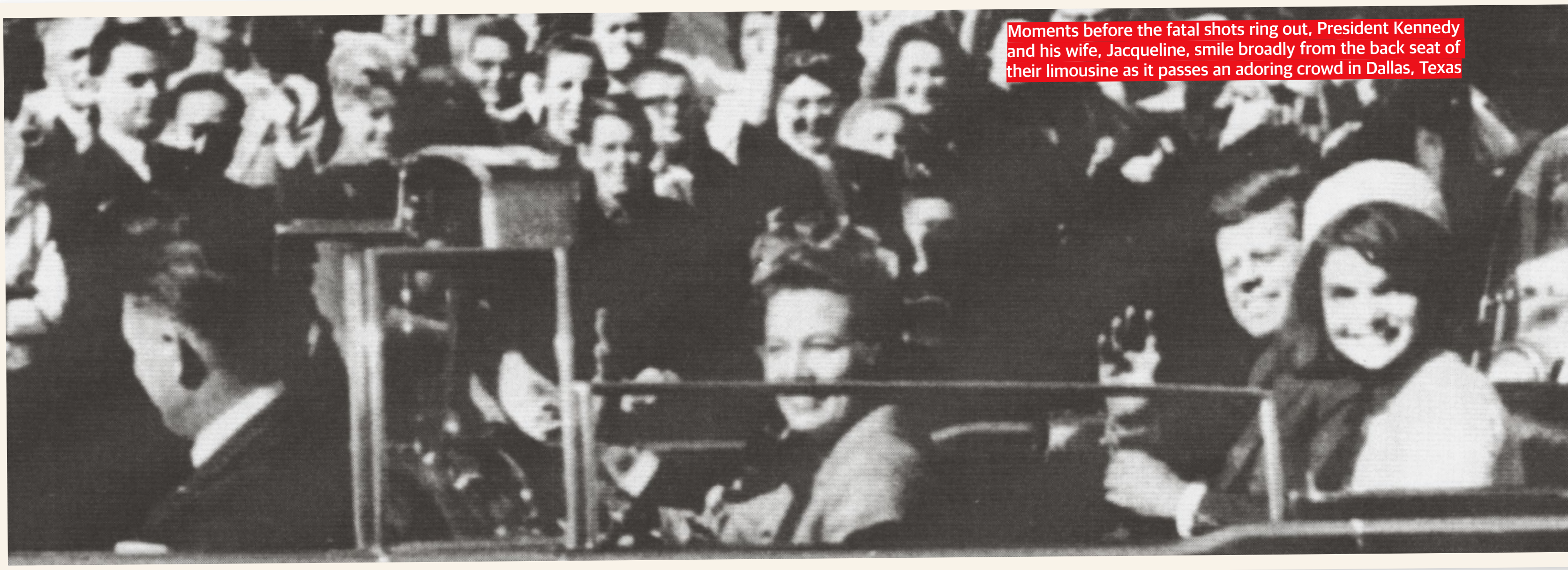
Codenamed X-100, the 1961 Lincoln Continental convertible that carried the presidential party through the streets of Dallas to a rendezvous with destiny on 22 November 1963, reached Parkland Memorial Hospital shortly after 12.30pm that day.

A Plexiglas top and cloth cover that had been removed earlier due to improved weather were reinstalled, and at 3.30pm, the limousine was driven to Love Field, where it was placed aboard a Lockheed C-130 transport aircraft and flown to Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, arriving at about 8pm.

Forwarded to the White House garage, the limousine was combed for evidence during the opening hours of the investigation into the assassination of President Kennedy. Numerous photographs were taken prior to the extensive cleaning that erased the grisly residue of the murder that had taken place earlier. In December 1963, X-100 was transported to the firm of Hess & Eisenhardt of Cincinnati, Ohio, which had previously performed modifications from its original state to Secret Service specifications as a presidential limousine.

The vehicle was rebuilt to include a bulletproof roof, titanium armour plating and bullet-resistant glass. The tyres were reinforced with internal aluminium rims to prevent them from flattening, and the passenger compartment was refurbished to repair the damage from the assassination.

X-100 remained in service for 15 more years, occasionally transporting presidents Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter and other dignitaries, its odometer reflecting over 50,000 ground miles. Retired in the late Seventies, the limousine was later placed on permanent display at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan.



Moments before the fatal shots ring out, President Kennedy and his wife, Jacqueline, smile broadly from the back seat of their limousine as it passes an adoring crowd in Dallas, Texas

Between the first and second shots that struck him, Kennedy raises his left hand to his throat, and Mrs Kennedy reaches out to him

President and Mrs John F Kennedy are greeted by Texas governor John Connally on arrival at Love Field in Dallas, Texas, on 22 November 1963

STRANGE BURIAL OF OSWALD

Lee Harvey Oswald died less than two hours after being shot by Jack Ruby. Paul Groody of the Miller Funeral Home made the necessary arrangements at the request of law enforcement, telling co-workers that they were for a 75-year-old man. The funeral was scheduled for 4pm on 25 November 1963. Only Oswald's widow, Marina, his mother, law enforcement officers, and the media were present at Shannon Rose Hill Memorial Park in Fort Worth.

Several clergymen had declined to participate, and reporters had to serve as pallbearers. Reverend Louis Saunders of the local Council of Churches stated: "Mrs Oswald tells me that her son, Lee Harvey, was a good boy and that she loved him. And today, Lord, we commit his spirit to your divine care."

Four years later, vandals stole Oswald's headstone. His mother replaced it, keeping the original in her home after it was recovered. In 1981, Oswald's body was exhumed for testing to verify that the remains were his. The original coffin had deteriorated. Funeral home officials told Oswald's brother, Robert, that it would be replaced and the original destroyed. Instead, the funeral home put it up for auction. A judge later ordered the home to return the coffin to the family and pay Robert nearly $90,000.

"By the time Kennedy was pronounced dead, Oswald was a wanted man"

24-year-old Lee Harvey Oswald, an employee of the Texas School Book Depository Company, had already been allowed to pass after encountering his supervisor and a Dallas police officer with a drawn handgun. Oswald, they said, appeared calm as he moved along. The young man bought a drink from a vending machine and then left the building, probably through its front entrance. Later, after conducting a headcount, the supervisor reported to the police that Oswald was missing.

An ex-US marine with admitted Marxist political sympathies, Oswald had actually defected to the Soviet Union, married a Russian national, and then been readmitted to the United States. He had been seen on the streets of New Orleans, Louisiana, protesting US 'interference' with the established Marxist regime in Cuba. He had supposedly maintained contact with the KGB, the Soviet secret police, even after returning to the United States. But all this was to come to light over the following months and years.

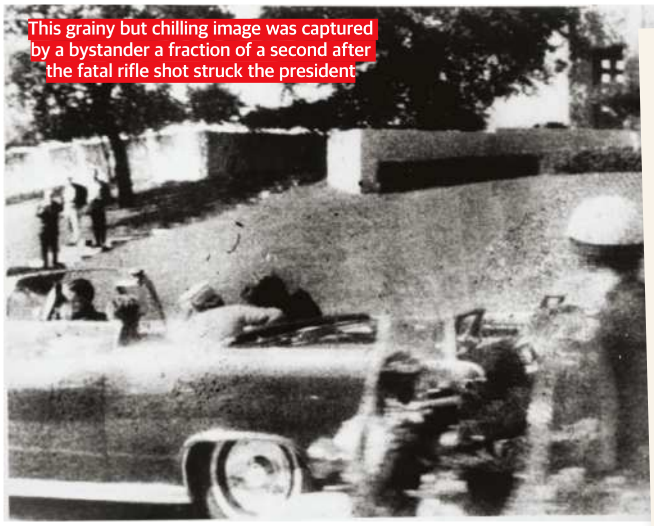
On 22 November 1963, by the time President Kennedy was pronounced dead, Oswald was a wanted man. He boarded a Dallas city bus, then took a taxi, and arrived at his boarding house on North Beckley Avenue at 1pm.

Observed by the housekeeper, he went quickly to his room, donned and zipped a jacket, and proceeded to a nearby bus stop. While Oswald waited, 39-year-old Dallas police officer JD Tippit, perhaps connecting a witness's description of the alleged assassin to Oswald's appearance, pulled his patrol car up to the bus stop. As the officer exited the vehicle, Oswald drew a handgun and fired four shots, fatally wounding Tippit.

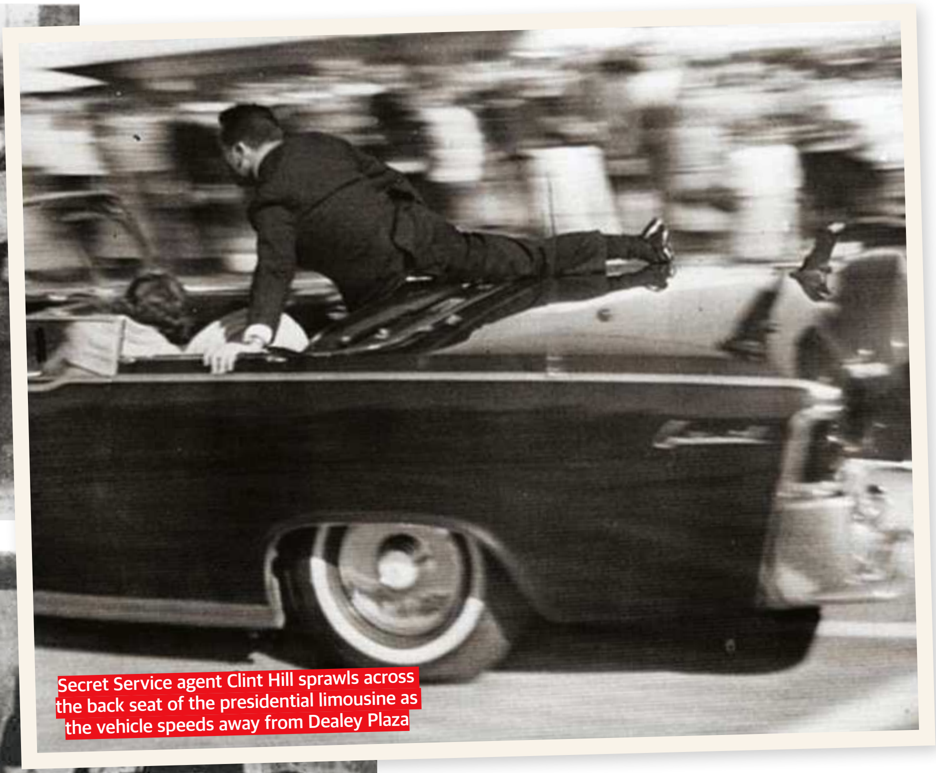
Oswald fled the scene and slipped into the nearby Texas Theater, where the film *Cry of Battle* was showing. He had neglected to purchase a ticket and the clerk, prodded by the manager of a neighbouring shoe store, called police. Confronted inside the theatre, Oswald again drew his weapon but failed to fire a shot before he was apprehended and dragged outside while shouting that he was a victim of police brutality. Transported to police headquarters, he was questioned and then charged with the murder of Officer Tippit. Hours later, he was also charged with the assassination of President Kennedy.

Soon after his capture, reporters peppered Oswald with questions, hounding him in a hallway at the police station. Oswald shouted in response: "I didn't shoot anybody... They've taken me in because of the fact that I lived in the Soviet Union. I'm just a patsy!" During a subsequent press conference, he asserted that he was unaware at the time that he was the suspect in connection with the president's assassination.

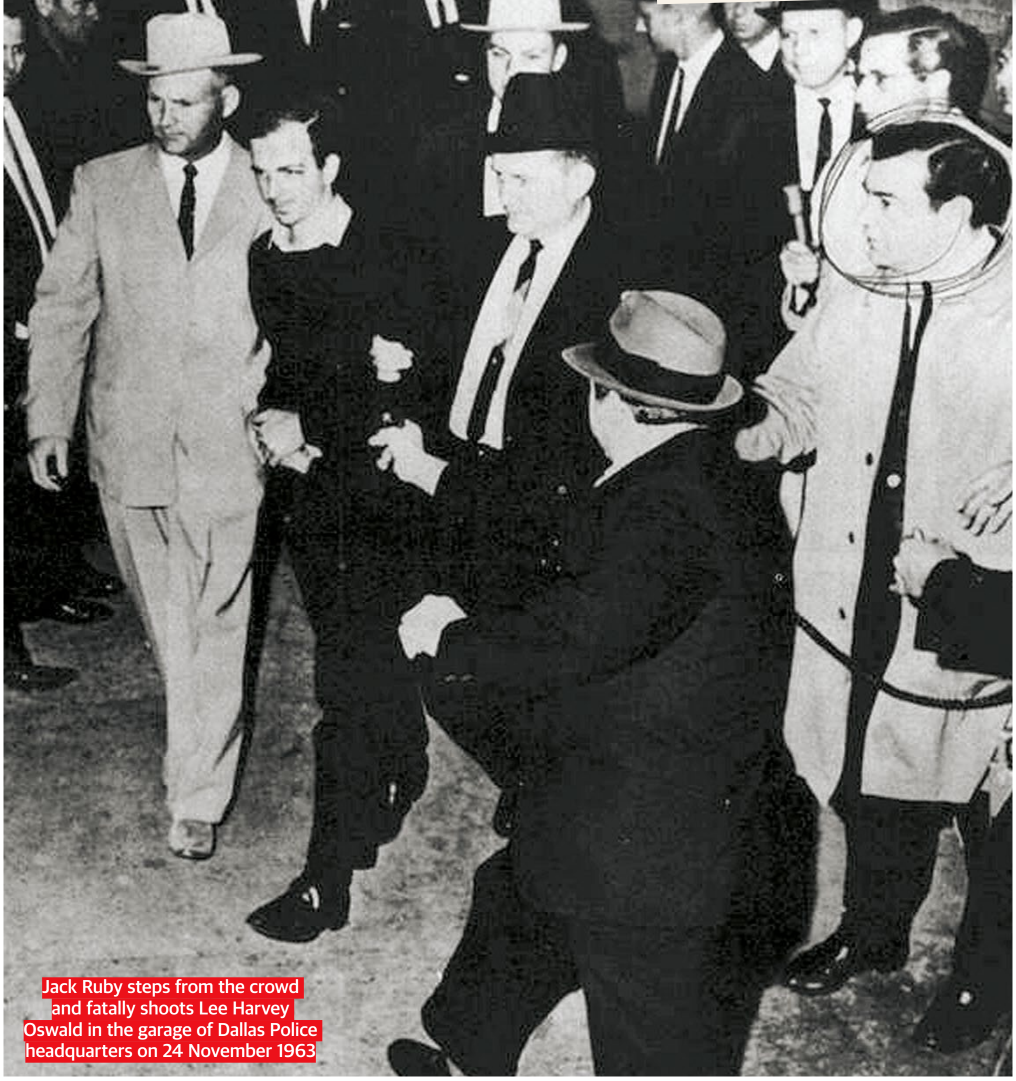
By 2pm on 22 November, the body of the slain president had been placed in a bronze coffin and, after an apparent squabble with local officials



This grainy but chilling image was captured by a bystander a fraction of a second after the fatal rifle shot struck the president



Secret Service agent Clint Hill sprawls across the back seat of the presidential limousine as the vehicle speeds away from Dealey Plaza



Jack Ruby steps from the crowd and fatally shoots Lee Harvey Oswald in the garage of Dallas Police headquarters on 24 November 1963

over jurisdiction, was headed to Love Field for loading aboard Air Force One and the flight back to Washington, DC. Asked if she wished to change out of her bloodstained clothing, Mrs Kennedy declined, saying: "I want them to see what they have done to Jack." Within the hour, Vice President Lyndon B Johnson, flanked by his wife, Lady Bird, and Mrs Kennedy, was sworn in as president of the United States in the crowded corridor of Air Force One. Federal Judge Sarah T Hughes of the Northern District of Texas administered the oath of office.

Air Force One arrived at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, at 6pm, and the president's body was transported to Bethesda Naval Hospital, where an autopsy was performed. From there, the coffin was draped in the national flag and moved to the East Room of the White House. On Sunday 24 November, it was relocated to the rotunda of the US Capitol aboard a caisson drawn by six grey horses. A seventh horse, jet black, riderless and with boots reversed in the stirrups, followed. As the president's body lay in state, the rotunda was opened to the public, and an estimated 250,000 people filed past to pay their respects before the hour of the funeral. One of the most poignant images of the tragic weekend depicted Mrs Kennedy kneeling, along with her six-year-old daughter, Caroline, at the president's bier.

The First Lady had requested that the funeral and related ceremonies be patterned after those of President Abraham Lincoln, felled by assassin John Wilkes Booth a century earlier. Attended by representatives of 53 countries, 18 of them presidents, the state funeral took place on the morning of Monday 25 November. Mrs Kennedy and other members of the family led

© Everett Collection Historical / Walter Oleksy / Alamy Stock Photo

the procession to St Matthew's Cathedral on foot. Cardinal Richard Cushing conducted the Mass, and as the coffin was borne from the cathedral, young John F Kennedy Jr stepped forward to salute his fallen father. It was the boy's third birthday, and the moment was captured by photographer Stan Stearns. The image became an American icon, a touch of innocence amid a torrent of national tragedy.

President Kennedy was laid to rest in section 45 of Arlington National Cemetery. With his brothers, Robert and Ted, by her side, Mrs Kennedy lit the eternal flame, marking the grave on the slope below Arlington House.

Lee Harvey Oswald never stood trial for murder. His life was taken in a bizarre turn of events that played out on national television on the morning of 24 November. As the accused assassin was being transferred from police headquarters to the county jail, which was deemed more secure, he was escorted in handcuffs into the headquarters garage. Suddenly, Jack Ruby, a 52-year-old nightclub owner with reported ties to organised crime, stepped from the crowd and shot Oswald in the stomach at point-blank range, fatally wounding him. The televised murder of Oswald only deepened the anguish of the American people, shaken to the core by the violence, horror and heartache that so swiftly had gripped the national consciousness.

On 29 November 1963, President Johnson appointed a commission headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren to investigate the circumstances surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy. From the outset, rumours of conspiracy swirled. A year later, however, the Warren Commission concluded in its report that Lee Harvey Oswald had acted alone.

Subsequent inquiries, official and unofficial, have failed to quell the lingering discourse on the surreal events of those terrible days in November 1963, which remain a curious blend of fact, fantasy and assumption tinged with the pangs of what might have been. A nation had lost its leader, and with him perished the golden days of sun-splashed, youthful exuberance that characterised the public image of John F Kennedy.

> "Young John Jr stepped forward to salute his fallen father. It was the boy's third birthday..."

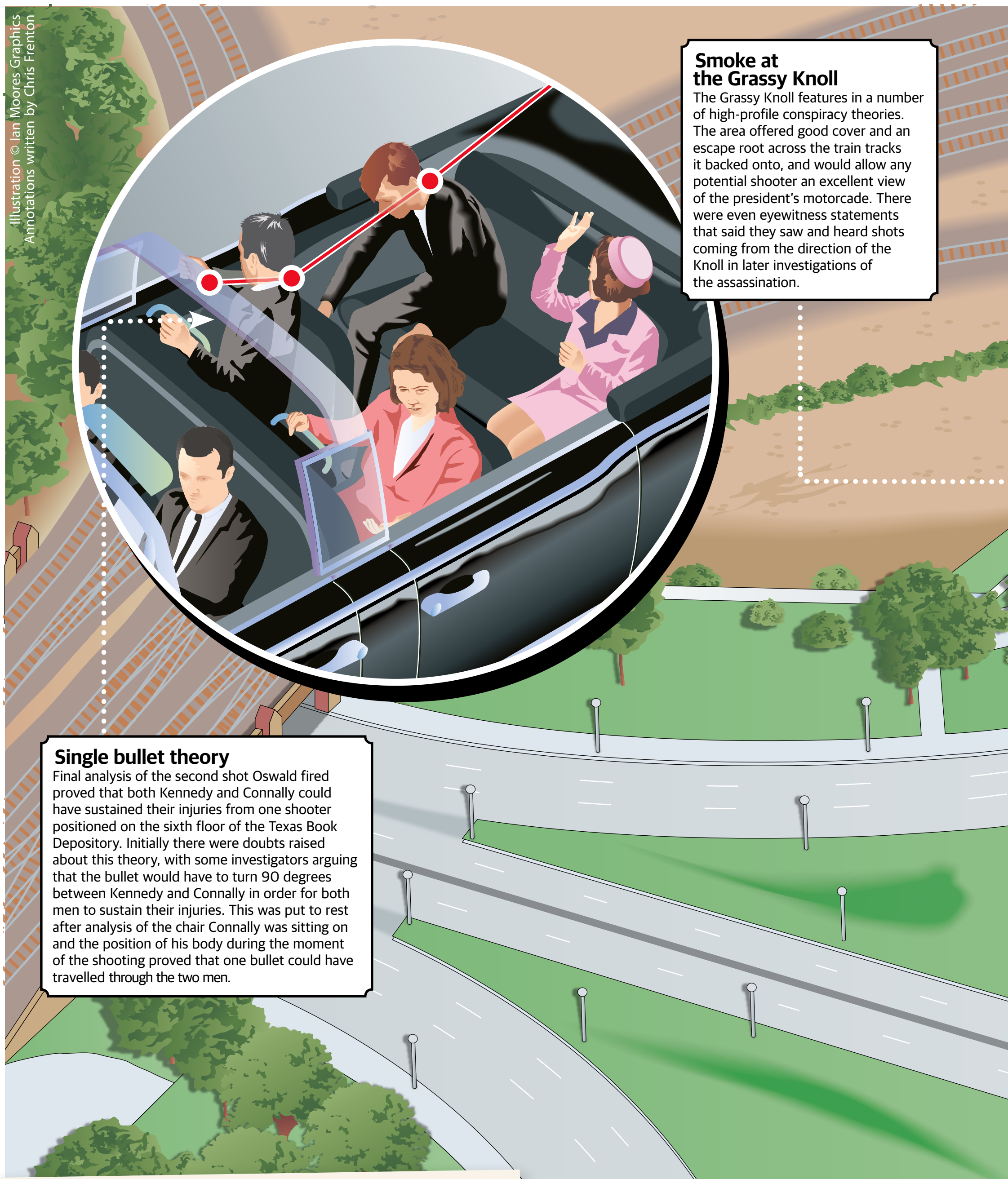


Illustration © Ian Moores Graphics
Annotations written by Chris Frenton

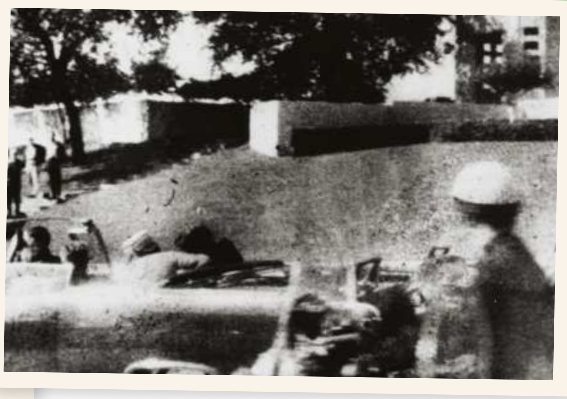
Smoke at the Grassy Knoll

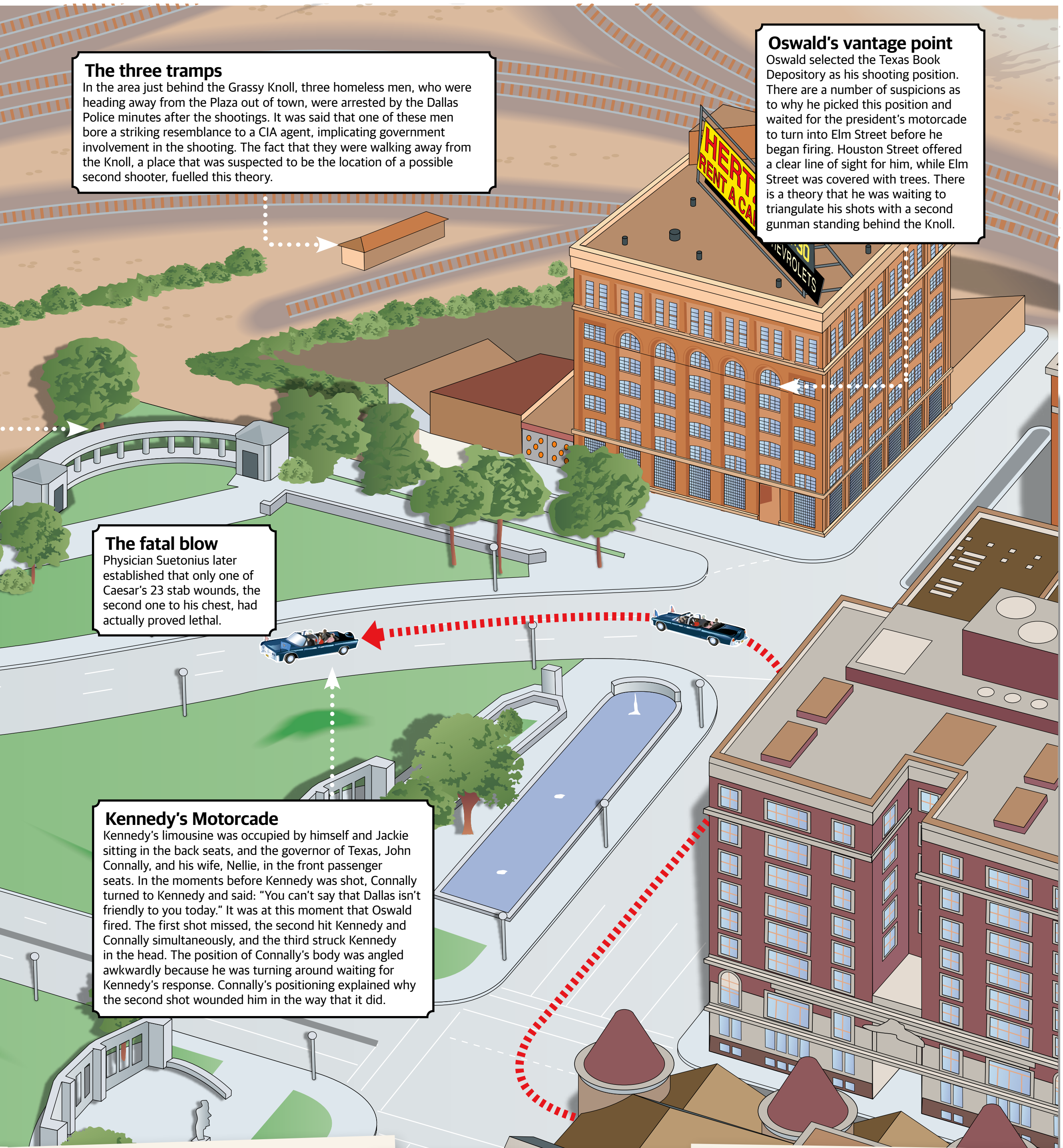
The Grassy Knoll features in a number of high-profile conspiracy theories. The area offered good cover and an escape root across the train tracks it backed onto, and would allow any potential shooter an excellent view of the president's motorcade. There were even eyewitness statements that said they saw and heard shots coming from the direction of the Knoll in later investigations of the assassination.

Single bullet theory

Final analysis of the second shot Oswald fired proved that both Kennedy and Connally could have sustained their injuries from one shooter positioned on the sixth floor of the Texas Book Depository. Initially there were doubts raised about this theory, with some investigators arguing that the bullet would have to turn 90 degrees between Kennedy and Connally in order for both men to sustain their injuries. This was put to rest after analysis of the chair Connally was sitting on and the position of his body during the moment of the shooting proved that one bullet could have travelled through the two men.

The President and Mrs Kennedy arrive in Dallas on 22 November, less than an hour before the assassination





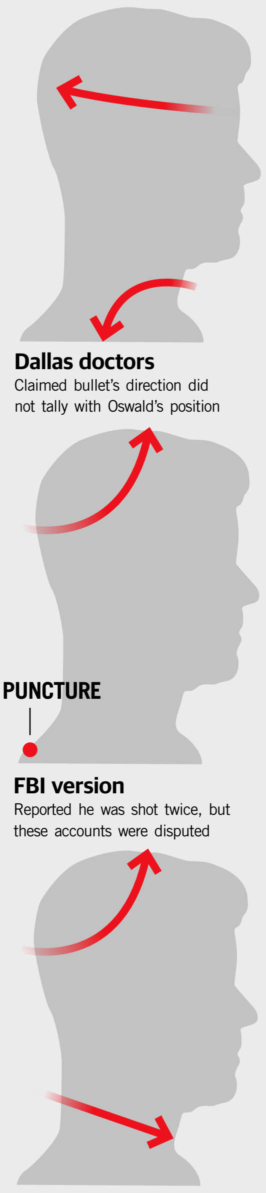
The three tramps
In the area just behind the Grassy Knoll, three homeless men, who were heading away from the Plaza out of town, were arrested by the Dallas Police minutes after the shootings. It was said that one of these men bore a striking resemblance to a CIA agent, implicating government involvement in the shooting. The fact that they were walking away from the Knoll, a place that was suspected to be the location of a possible second shooter, fuelled this theory.

Oswald's vantage point
Oswald selected the Texas Book Depository as his shooting position. There are a number of suspicions as to why he picked this position and waited for the president's motorcade to turn into Elm Street before he began firing. Houston Street offered a clear line of sight for him, while Elm Street was covered with trees. There is a theory that he was waiting to triangulate his shots with a second gunman standing behind the Knoll.

The fatal blow
Physician Suetonius later established that only one of Caesar's 23 stab wounds, the second one to his chest, had actually proved lethal.

Kennedy's Motorcade
Kennedy's limousine was occupied by himself and Jackie sitting in the back seats, and the governor of Texas, John Connally, and his wife, Nellie, in the front passenger seats. In the moments before Kennedy was shot, Connally turned to Kennedy and said: "You can't say that Dallas isn't friendly to you today." It was at this moment that Oswald fired. The first shot missed, the second hit Kennedy and Connally simultaneously, and the third struck Kennedy in the head. The position of Connally's body was angled awkwardly because he was turning around waiting for Kennedy's response. Connally's positioning explained why the second shot wounded him in the way that it did.

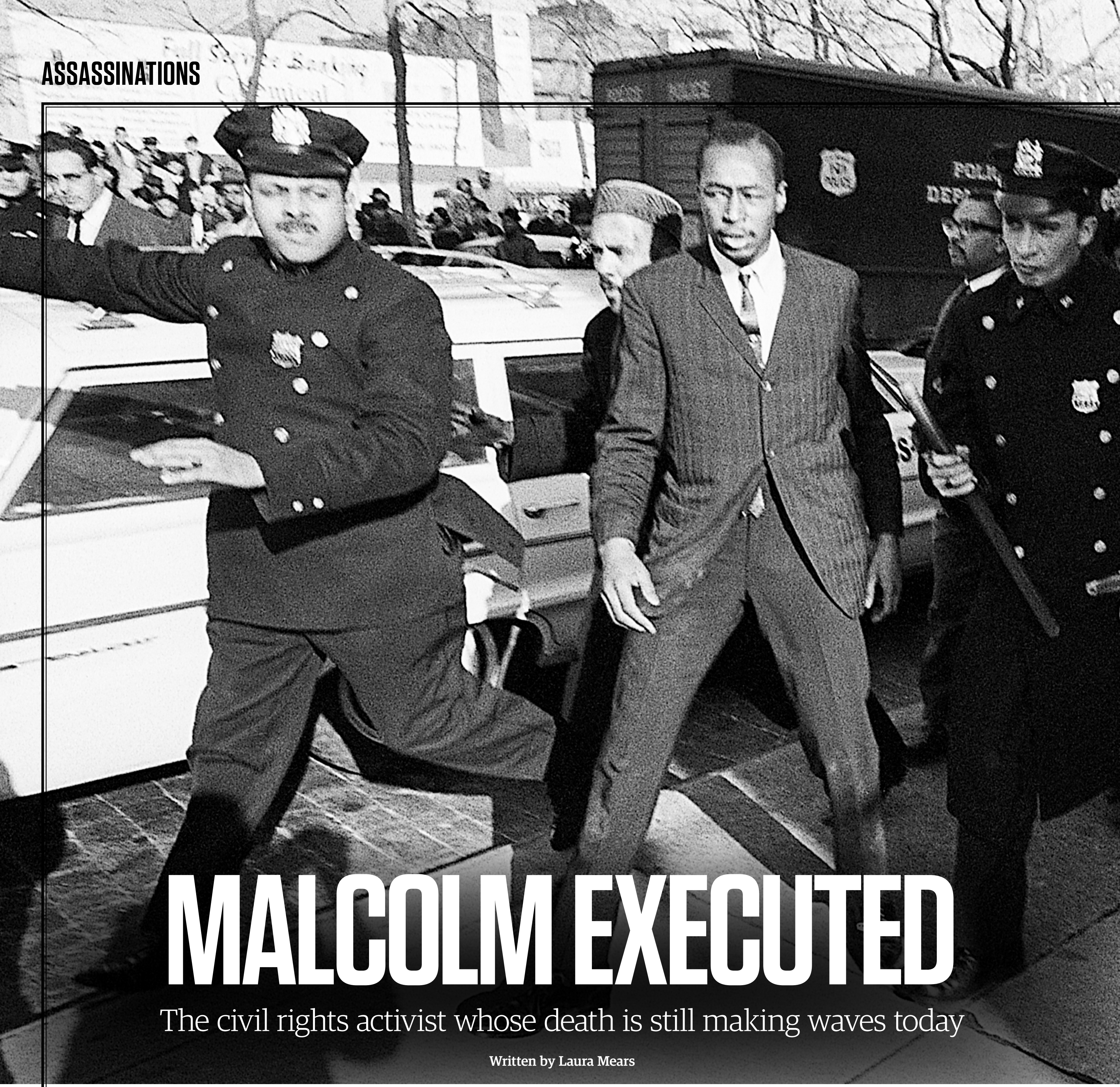
KENNEDY'S WOUNDS THEORIES



Dallas doctors
Claimed bullet's direction did not tally with Oswald's position

FBI version
Reported he was shot twice, but these accounts were disputed

Navy view
Came closest to the now (mostly) accepted truth



MALCOLM EXECUTED

The civil rights activist whose death is still making waves today

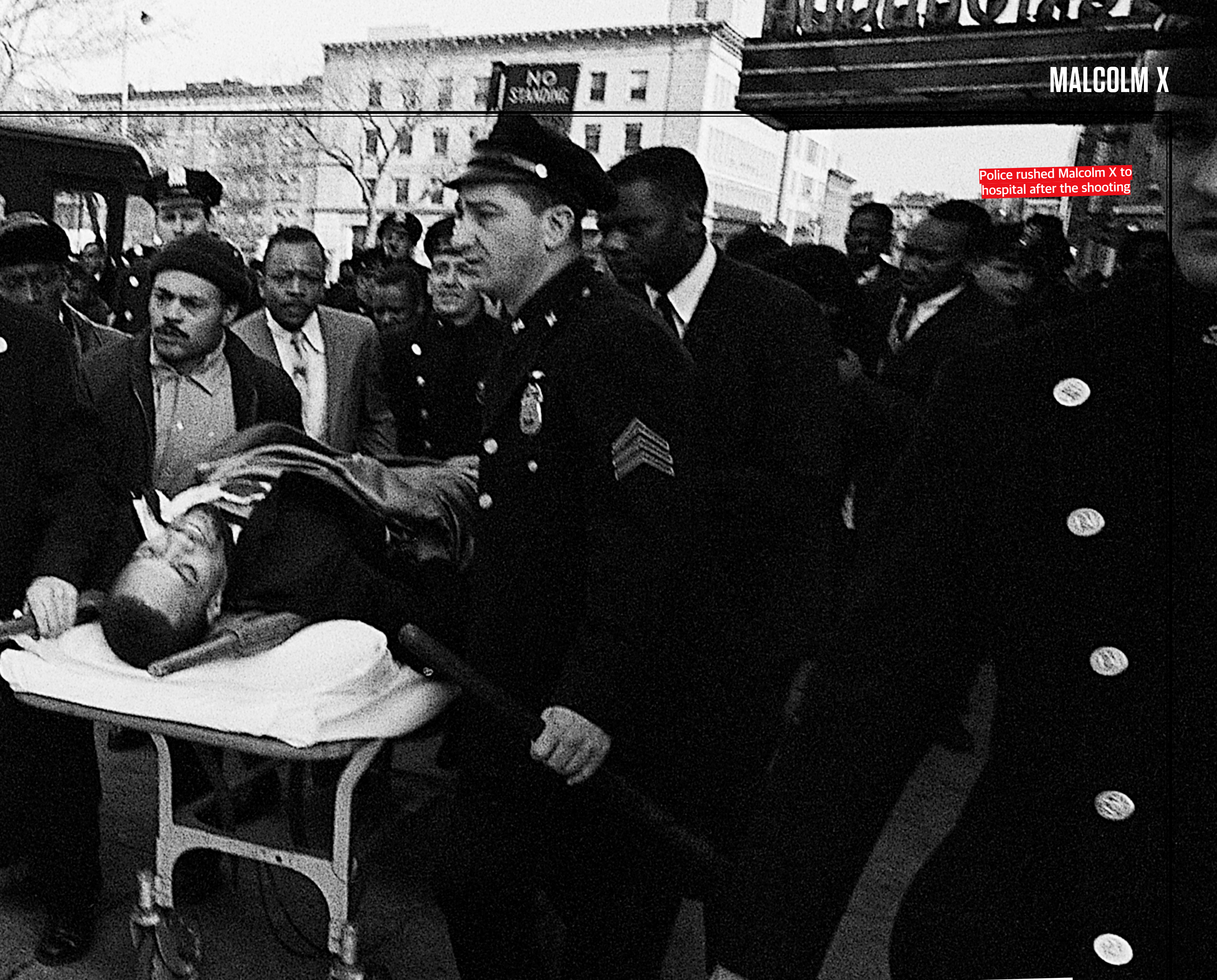
Written by Laura Mears

On 21 February 1965, in the Audubon Ballroom in Manhattan, armed men shot 39-year-old activist Malcolm X 15 times. He had been addressing the Organization of Afro-American Unity, a group fighting for the human rights of African Americans. He may have known his killers; he certainly knew he was at risk.

Malcolm X rose to prominence as a member of the Nation of Islam, a black nationalist religious movement. Magnetic, articulate and unafraid to speak out, he had been right-hand man to the organisation's leader, Elijah Muhammad. But a rift had started to emerge between the two men, and Malcolm X had broken away from the organisation.

Following a pilgrimage to Mecca, his ideology had started to shift. He converted to Sunni Islam and returned to America with a different message: "You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to re-arrange much of my thought patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions."

For decades, the official line was that this break with the Nation of Islam had been the cause of his 1965 murder. Three men, all of whom were involved with the NOI, were convicted of the crime, but in December 2021 two of them, Khalil Islam and Muhammad A Aziz, had their convictions overturned. A judicial review of the case was launched after the death of police officer Raymond Wood, whose deathbed confession claimed that he was tasked with ensuring that Malcolm X's security team were arrested the day before the activist was gunned down. He further alleged that the crime and subsequent investigation was the subject of a cover-up operation by the NYPD and the FBI.



Police rushed Malcolm X to hospital after the shooting

Thomas Hagan, who admitted to the crime, had maintained for decades that the two men convicted alongside him were innocent, but has consistently been unwilling or unable to to name all of the real co-conspirators, whom he says bundled him into a car in New Jersey and tasked him with the murder in what he at the time thought was a test of his newfound religious faith.

Malcolm X died at a turning point in his campaign for human rights, and his ideas left a powerful legacy. His autobiography, published shortly after his death, is regarded as one of the most influential non-fiction books of all time.

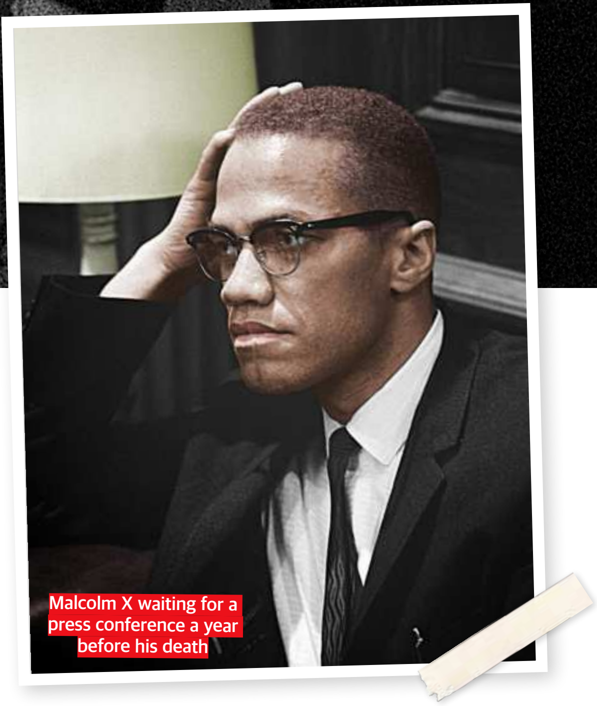
MALCOLM X

CAUSE OF DEATH
GUNSHOT WOUNDS

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
21 FEBRUARY 1965

LOCATION
NEW YORK, NY, USA

ASSASSINS
THOMAS HAGAN, UNKNOWN ASSAILANTS



Malcolm X waiting for a press conference a year before his death

© Getty Images, Marion S. Trikosko

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR

CAUSE OF DEATH
GUNSHOT WOUND

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
4 APRIL 1968

LOCATION
MEMPHIS, TN, USA

ASSASSIN
JAMES EARL RAY

DEATH OF A KING

A crusader for nonviolent protest and racial equality, Martin Luther King became a natural leader in the fight for civil rights, but his murder resonated around the world

Written by Dominic Reseigh-Lincoln

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s – a social and political upheaval that changed the United States, and indeed the wider world – has immortalised many of its most famous activists. Some were radicals, urging African Americans to break the shackles of enforced segregation and create a new nation of black supremacy, while others preached a policy of peace, believing only diplomacy and reason could undo the prejudices of old.

Martin Luther King Jr, the son of a Baptist minister and one of the figureheads of the Civil Rights Movement throughout the 1950s and 1960s, was one such peaceful individual – but unlike his contemporaries, his legacy owes itself as much to the aftermath of his death as it does the inspirational actions of his life. As a figure campaigning for change in a country struggling to shake off its divisionist traditions, King refused to accept the segregation that forced African Americans into lives as second-class citizens.

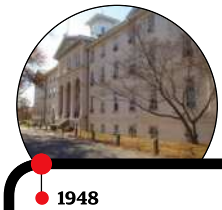
He organised sit-ins and led rallies and protests, but always promoted a mantra of nonviolence – his position as a minister and his natural talent for public speaking made him a force of nature, captivating the media and befuddling both the radical black activists of the movement and the white traditionalists refusing to alter the status quo. It also made him a target, and his life was filled with threats. He was stabbed in 1958 – a letter opener almost piercing his aorta – but whether by luck or the grace of God, King survived.

In life, King was the voice of a new era, one that wanted to make all citizens equal in the eyes of god and the Constitution, a peaceful force in a nation ready to blow like a powder keg. In his later years, he was a key influence on the ratification of the Civil Rights Bill, which granted civil equality for African Americans, but his death helped secure the last – and perhaps the most vital – legislative change of the Civil Rights Movement: the Housing Act. The wave of mourning felt across the nation following his murder, however tragic, was exactly what was needed to ensure every citizen – regardless of colour or creed – could have a home that was protected from discrimination.

King's rise to fame

15 January 1929
Born Michael King Jr in Atlanta, Georgia, he's the middle child of Reverend Michael King and Alberta Williams King.

1934
King Sr finds inspiration in the works of German theologian Martin Luther. He renames himself and his eldest son in tribute.



1944
A gifted student, King graduates at the age of 15 and passes the entry exam for the prestigious Morehouse College.

1948
King graduates with a BA in Sociology. He becomes a minister and enters the Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania.

1 December 1955
King joins the Montgomery Bus Boycott following Rosa Parks' arrest. Four days later, he's elected the spokesman for the movement.

1957
The Southern Christian Leadership Conference is formed by King to battle segregation and attain civil rights for African Americans.

20 September 1958
While at a book signing, King is stabbed in the chest by a mentally ill woman. He is hospitalised but will make a full recovery.

1960
King is arrested and sentenced to four months in prison. Presidential candidate Kennedy helps to remove the sentence.

13 April 1963
King launches the Birmingham campaign. Nonviolent protesters are blasted with water cannons and arrested during sit-ins.

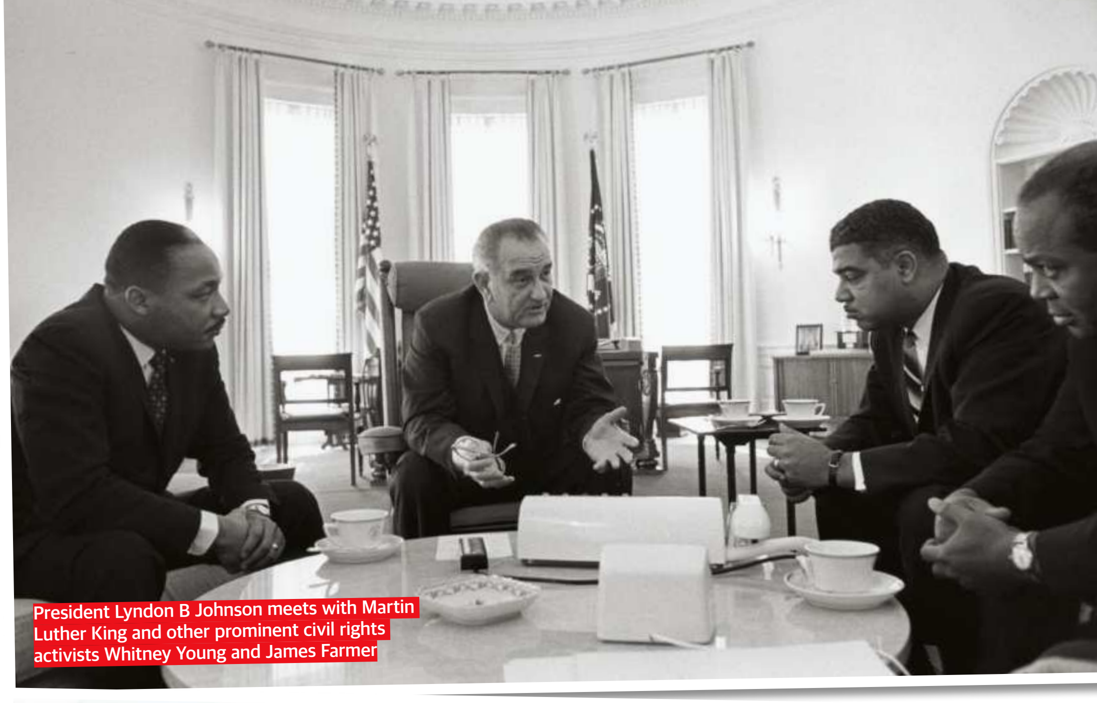
10 May 1963
After a month of protests, the Birmingham agreement is struck, enabling African Americans to use shops and public services.

28 August 1963
King delivers his iconic 'I Have A Dream' speech to 250,000 activists on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, DC.

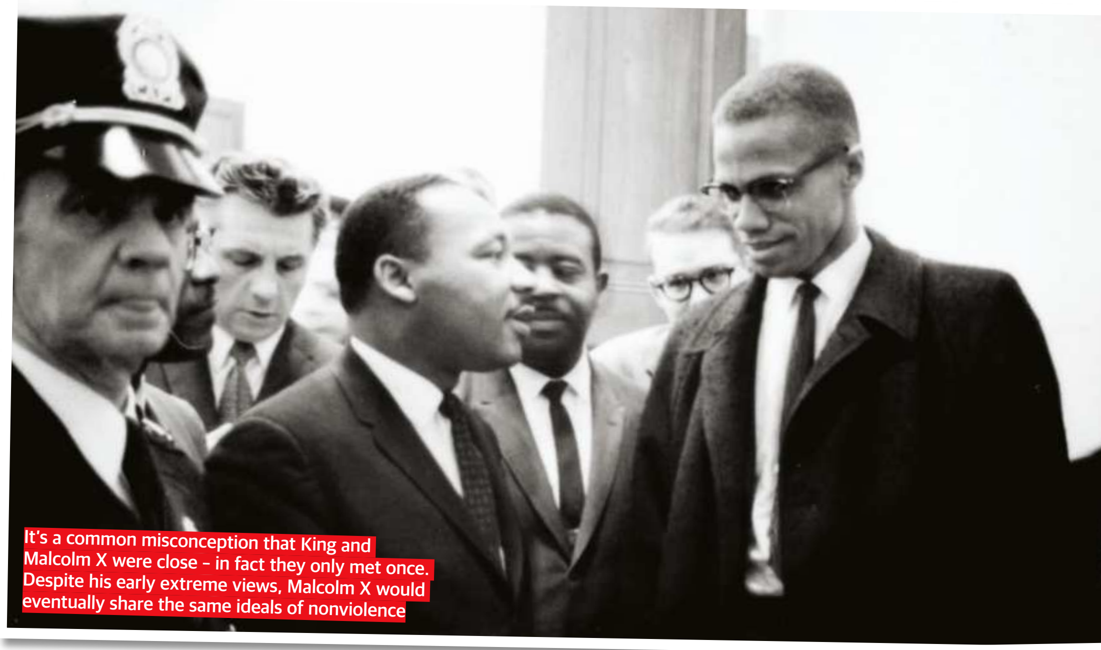
3 January 1964
After years as the figurehead of nonviolent and, more importantly, successful protests, King appears on the cover of *Time* magazine.

2 July 1964
The Civil Rights Act is signed into law by President Lyndon B Johnson. King and fellow activists celebrate, but many white citizens choose to ignore the new law.

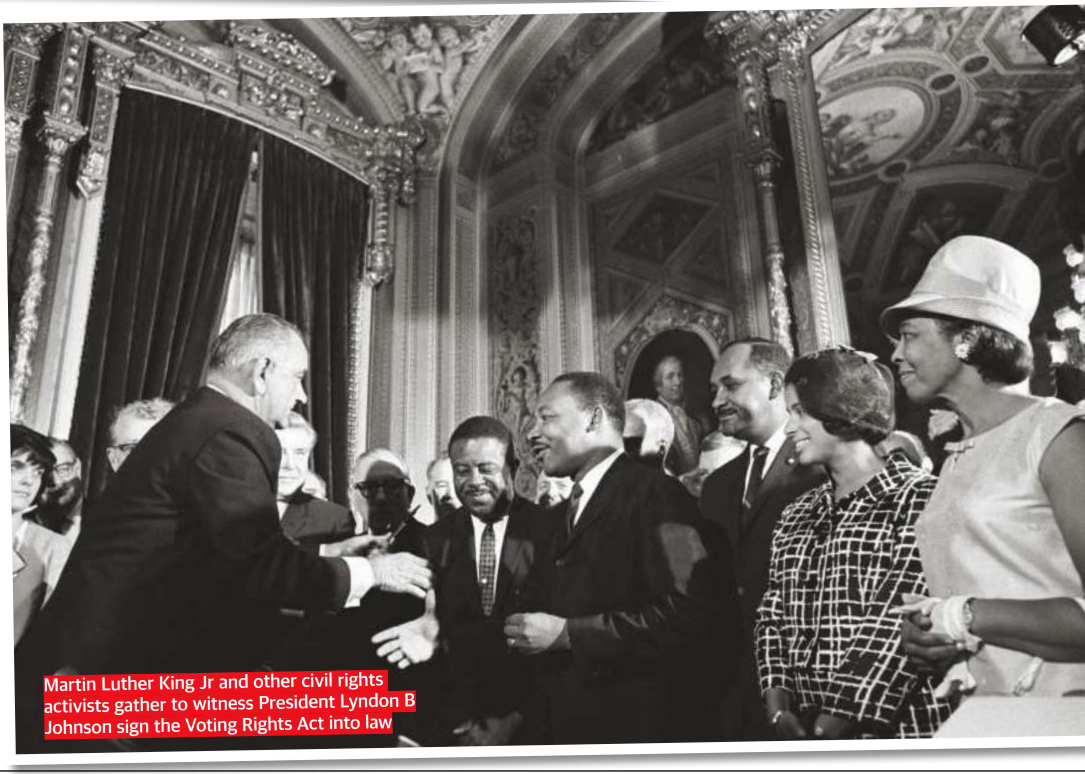
4 April 1968
A day after he delivers his final 'I've Been To The Mountaintop' speech, King is fatally shot in Memphis. Riots and mourning engulf the US.



President Lyndon B Johnson meets with Martin Luther King and other prominent civil rights activists Whitney Young and James Farmer



It's a common misconception that King and Malcolm X were close – in fact they only met once. Despite his early extreme views, Malcolm X would eventually share the same ideals of nonviolence



Martin Luther King Jr and other civil rights activists gather to witness President Lyndon B Johnson sign the Voting Rights Act into law

THE DAYS BEFORE

As Martin Luther King Jr made the fateful steps towards that final evening in Memphis, the years-long Civil Rights Movement was reaching fever pitch

In 1968, after more than a decade of activism, true change was finally about to become a reality for African Americans living in the United States. Despite the abolition of slavery during the presidency of Abraham Lincoln, non-white citizens still lived a half life, forced into segregation and robbed of the equality championed in the Constitution. Now, with spring in full swing, Martin Luther King Jr and the Civil Rights Movement had done (to some) the unthinkable: they had changed the opinions of the people with power, people with the power to change the law.

Yet with the bill mere months away from being signed into law, those final days of King's life were becoming a tense affair. The movement was splintering, with more aggressive elements, such as the Black Panthers group, bringing negative attention to the cause. Progress was being made, but riots were becoming as common as the peaceful protests promoted by King.

Such a radical change did not occur overnight, but recent actions had set events into an even swifter motion. The Civil Rights bill itself had originally been called for by President John F Kennedy in 1963 – charismatic yet ferocious in his political demeanour, JFK was a force to be reckoned with, but even he encountered considerable resistance (and calls for a counter bill) in the Senate. His assassination later that year rocked the nation, but it also passed the presidency to Lyndon B Johnson – a man as passionate about achieving true equality for American citizens as his predecessor.

> "Nothing is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity"

King followed the path of the bill with great interest, and his presence in many of the Senate hearings throughout its existence bound the two together. King met with President Johnson a number of times as the bill inched towards completion. Such a realisation enabled King to begin to focus his attention elsewhere: specifically, the need to improve the lives of the USA's poorest people and his opposition to the Vietnam War.

By 1968, the efforts of Martin Luther King Jr and the Civil Rights Movement were finally starting to affect the country where it mattered: in government. Three years earlier, the movement had helped usher in the first true legislative change for all citizens regardless of colour – the Voting Rights Act, which finally provided lawful rights for African Americans. Now, King and his compatriots had their eyes on the biggest prize of all: amending the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Despite so many years at the head of the Civil Rights Movement, and legislative change very much a reality for African Americans across the country, King was still leading the charge on all fronts. In 1968, he was organising the 'Poor People's Campaign', which aimed to address the serious economic deficit that alienated poorer areas of society. More importantly, it was a multicultural cause. King was determined to address the poor living conditions of all Americans, regardless of their ethnicity.

On 28 March, King made his first major push of the campaign, directing his attention not towards Washington, DC as he had in the past, but towards Memphis and the ongoing Memphis Sanitation Strike. The strike – which saw 1,300 black workers walk out due to dangerous working conditions, discrimination and the horrific deaths of two workers – was national news, and King was determined to use Memphis as a catalyst to kick-start the campaign.

However, an unusual burst of riots and violent incidents brought the campaign considerable negative press, with high-ranking civil rights activist Bayard Rustin even pulling out of the event because he felt it was too broad and unrealistic in its goals of demanding widespread economic rejuvenation.

On 3 April, King flew into Memphis proper in order to make a speech at the Mason Temple (the world headquarters of the Church of God in Christ) – his flight was initially delayed due to a bomb threat, but he made it in time to make the address. The speech, 'I've Been To The Mountaintop', became one of King's most famous orations. "Somewhere I read of the freedom of assembly. Somewhere I read of the freedom of speech. Somewhere I read of the freedom of press. Somewhere I read that the greatness of America is the right to protest for rights. And so just as I say, we aren't going to let dogs or water hoses turn us around. We aren't going to let any injunction turn us around. We are going on."

ENEMIES OF THE KING

You don't become a figurehead of the Civil Rights Movement, nonviolent or otherwise, without making some influential foes

EDGAR HOOVER

Having the radical director of the FBI as an enemy is quite a feat. While it's not been proven that Hoover had any objection to King's objectives in the Civil Rights Movement, he did attempt to destabilise its progress upon discovering communist spies among his top advisers.

GOVERNOR GEORGE WALLACE

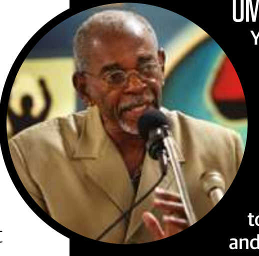
When George Wallace took the Oath of Office for the governorship of Alabama, he brought with him an iron desire to enforce and maintain racial segregation. It was a stance he pursued for many years, especially in spite of King's movements, but he would recant his views in later life.

MALCOLM X

While Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr weren't enemies as individuals, their beliefs on how to achieve equality for African Americans were, for a certain amount of time, polarised in the extreme. In his early years, Malcolm X struggled with King's staunch stance of nonviolence, believing that equality could only be achieved through force.

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

Stokely Carmichael was once a devoted and passionate supporter of King's SNCC, but like many young adopters, he eventually became frustrated with the slow progress of the movement. He would go on to coin and promote the term 'black power' – a phrase King would describe as "an unfortunate choice of words."



OMALI YESHITELA

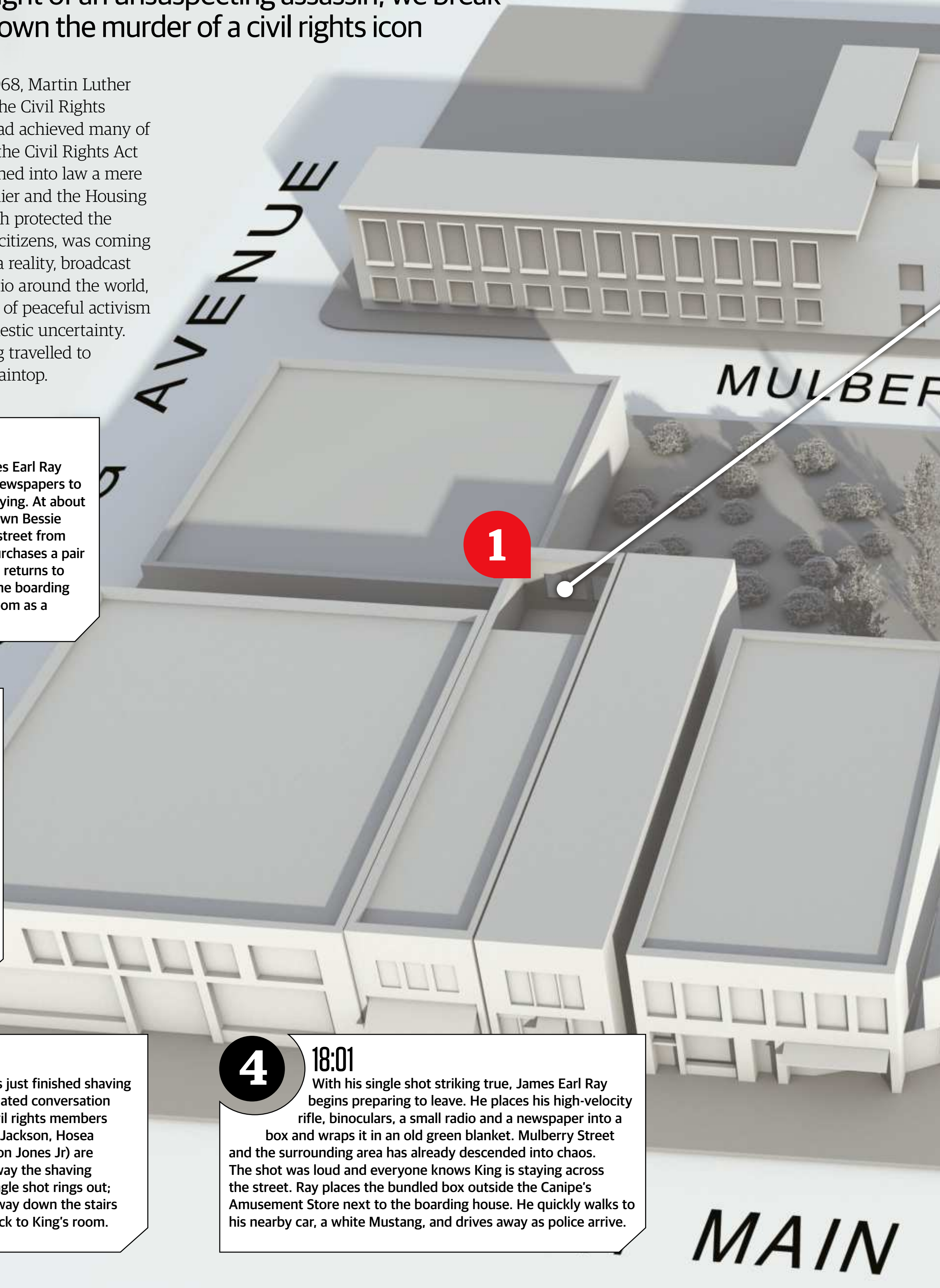
Yeshitela (born Joseph Waller) rejected King's ideas of racial integration, instead believing that the US (as well as the wider world) could only prosper under black supremacy and a new African nation. He continued to be active in violent protests and, unlike Malcolm X, he never rescinded those supremacist views.

THE ASSASSINATION 4 APRIL 1968

From a simple stroll onto a motel balcony to the flight of an unsuspecting assassin, we break down the murder of a civil rights icon

Memphis, Tennessee

By April 1968, Martin Luther King Jr and the Civil Rights Movement had achieved many of their goals - the Civil Rights Act had been signed into law a mere two days earlier and the Housing Bill Act, which protected the homes of all citizens, was coming into effect. Equality was fast becoming a reality, broadcast across the airwaves of every TV and radio around the world, and King remained the triumphant face of peaceful activism in defiance of age-old tensions and domestic uncertainty. And so, with victory all but certain, King travelled to Memphis for his last push to the mountaintop.



1

15:30

Earlier in the day, ex-convict James Earl Ray had used local news reports and newspapers to determine where King would be staying. At about 3.30pm, he rents room 5B in the run-down Bessie Brewster boarding house, situated across the street from the Lorraine Motel. Ray then heads out and purchases a pair of binoculars for $41.55 from a local store, and returns to the room to watch from his vantage point at the boarding house. He uses a spot in the communal bathroom as a sniping position and waits for King to appear.

2

17:30

It's a balmy evening in Memphis Tennessee and Martin Luther King Jr, key members of his entourage and a large contingent of the movement are staying in the birthplace of rock and roll following King's delivery of the iconic 'I've Been To The Mountaintop' speech at the Mason Temple the day before. King is staying at the Lorraine Motel, a two-storey building on Mulberry Street in downtown Memphis. A popular choice for King when staying in Bluff City, he has just finished getting ready for a dinner with local minister Billy Kyles.

3

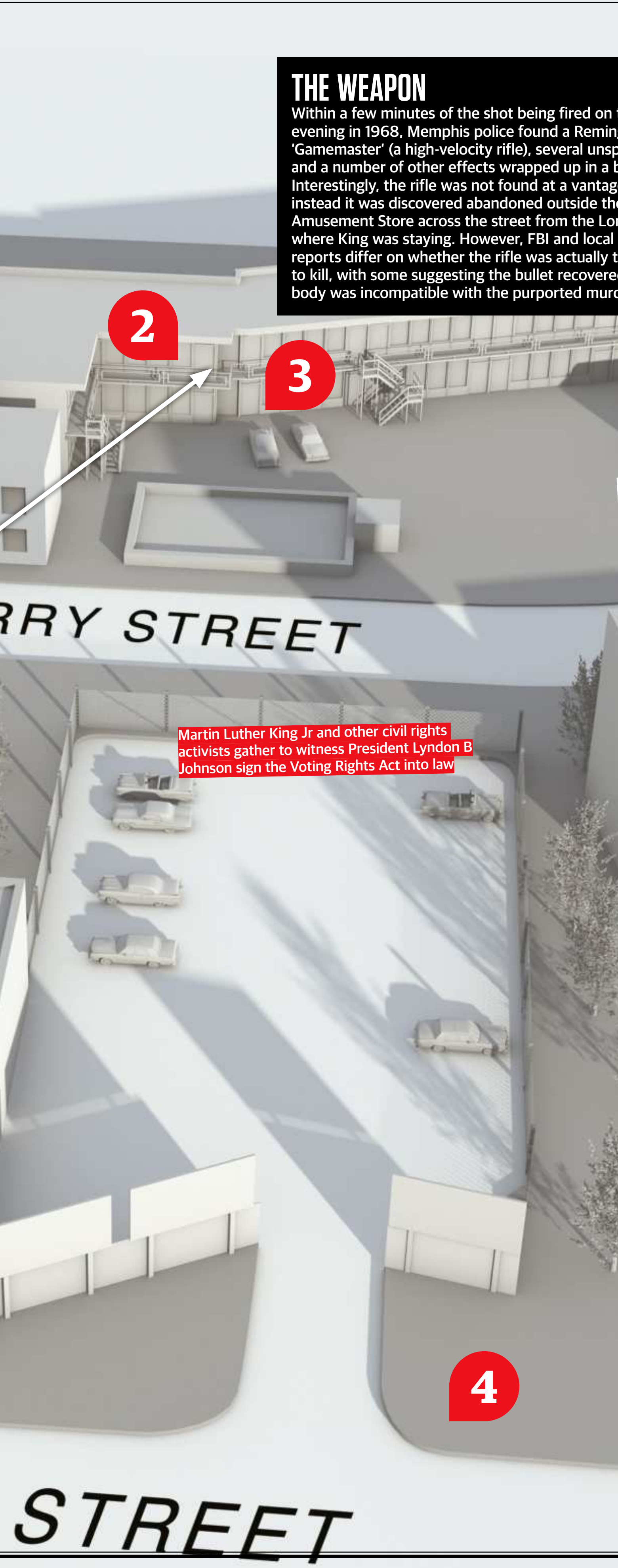
18:01

Booked into room 306, King has just finished shaving (he's running late due to an animated conversation with minister Kyles). A group of civil rights members (James Bevel, Chauncey Eskridge, Jesse Jackson, Hosea Williams, Andrew Young and the driver Solomon Jones Jr) are waiting out front in a white Cadillac. Wiping away the shaving powder, King steps out onto the balcony. A single shot rings out; it strikes King through the cheek. Kyles is halfway down the stairs outside when he hears the shot and rushes back to King's room.

4

18:01

With his single shot striking true, James Earl Ray begins preparing to leave. He places his high-velocity rifle, binoculars, a small radio and a newspaper into a box and wraps it in an old green blanket. Mulberry Street and the surrounding area has already descended into chaos. The shot was loud and everyone knows King is staying across the street. Ray places the bundled box outside the Canipe's Amusement Store next to the boarding house. He quickly walks to his nearby car, a white Mustang, and drives away as police arrive.



Martin Luther King Jr and other civil rights activists gather to witness President Lyndon B Johnson sign the Voting Rights Act into law

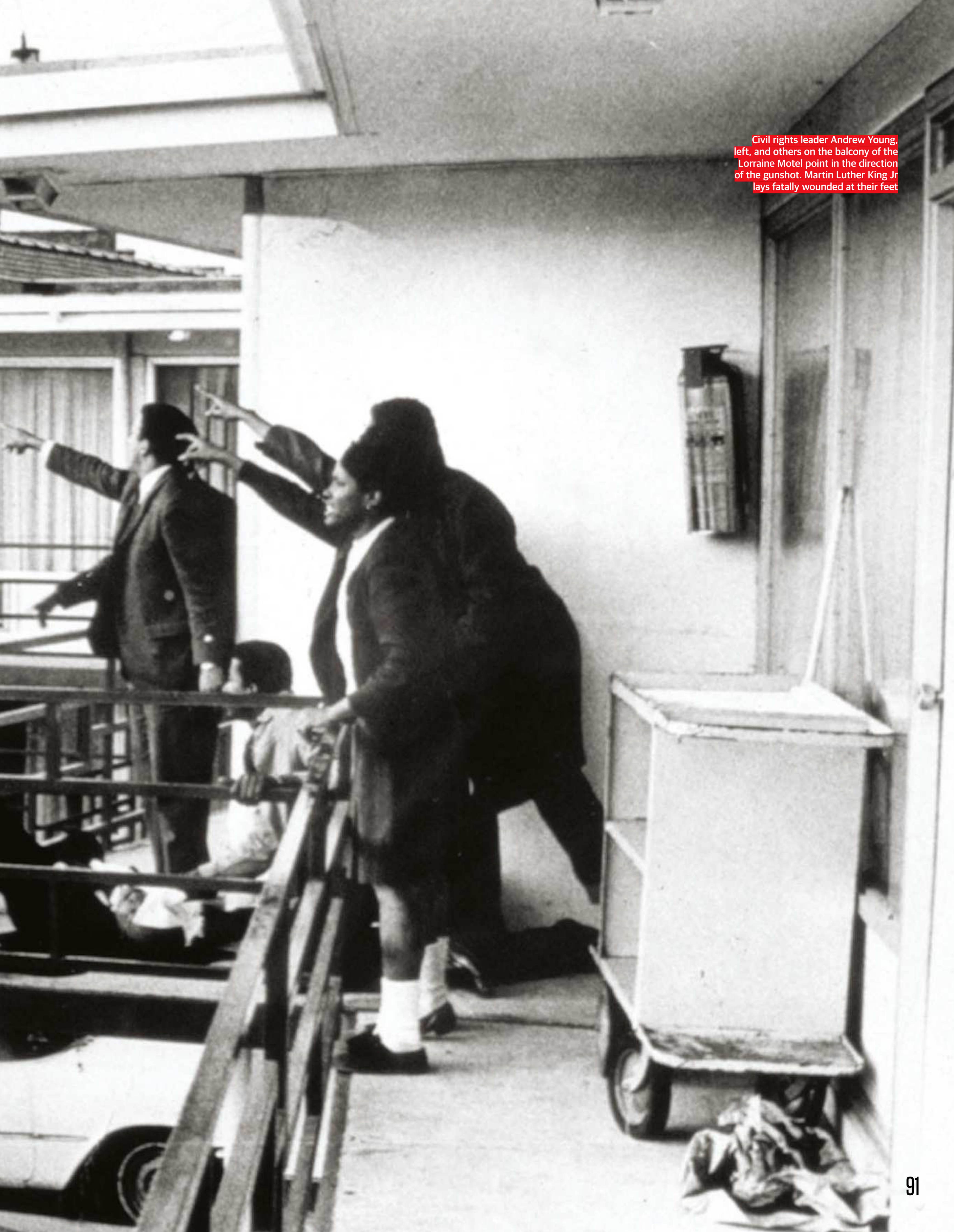
THE WEAPON

Within a few minutes of the shot being fired on that fateful evening in 1968, Memphis police found a Remington 760 'Gamemaster' (a high-velocity rifle), several unspent rounds and a number of other effects wrapped up in a bundle. Interestingly, the rifle was not found at a vantage point – instead it was discovered abandoned outside the Canipe's Amusement Store across the street from the Lorraine Motel where King was staying. However, FBI and local police reports differ on whether the rifle was actually the one used to kill, with some suggesting the bullet recovered from King's body was incompatible with the purported murder weapon.

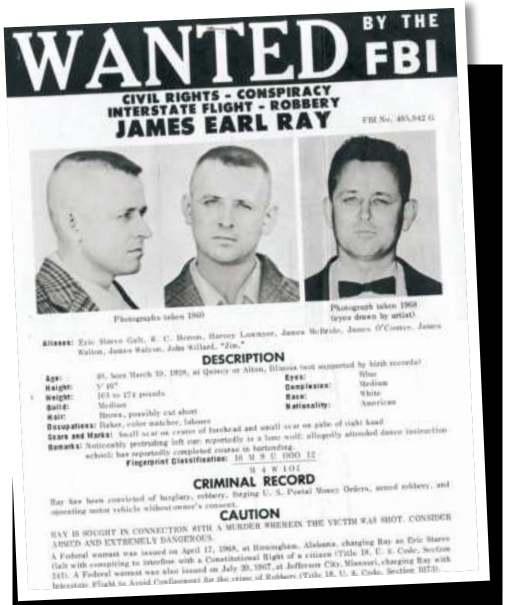
Delegate Walter E Fauntroy holds the rifle that was used to kill King

The red and white wreath at the Lorraine Motel marks the spot where King was assassinated

It was from this window, on the first floor of the Betty Brewster boarding house, that James Earl Ray took the shot that killed Martin Luther King Jr



Civil rights leader Andrew Young, left, and others on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel point in the direction of the gunshot. Martin Luther King Jr lays fatally wounded at their feet



WANTED BY THE FBI

CIVIL RIGHTS - CONSPIRACY
INTERSTATE FLIGHT - ROBBERY
JAMES EARL RAY

Photographs taken 1960

Photograph taken 1968
(eyes drawn by artist)

DESCRIPTION

CRIMINAL RECORD

CAUTION

RAY IS SOUGHT IN CONNECTION WITH A MURDER WHEREIN THE VICTIM WAS SHOT. CONSIDER ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS.

WHAT WAS RAY'S MOTIVATION?

RAY HAD RACIST BELIEFS

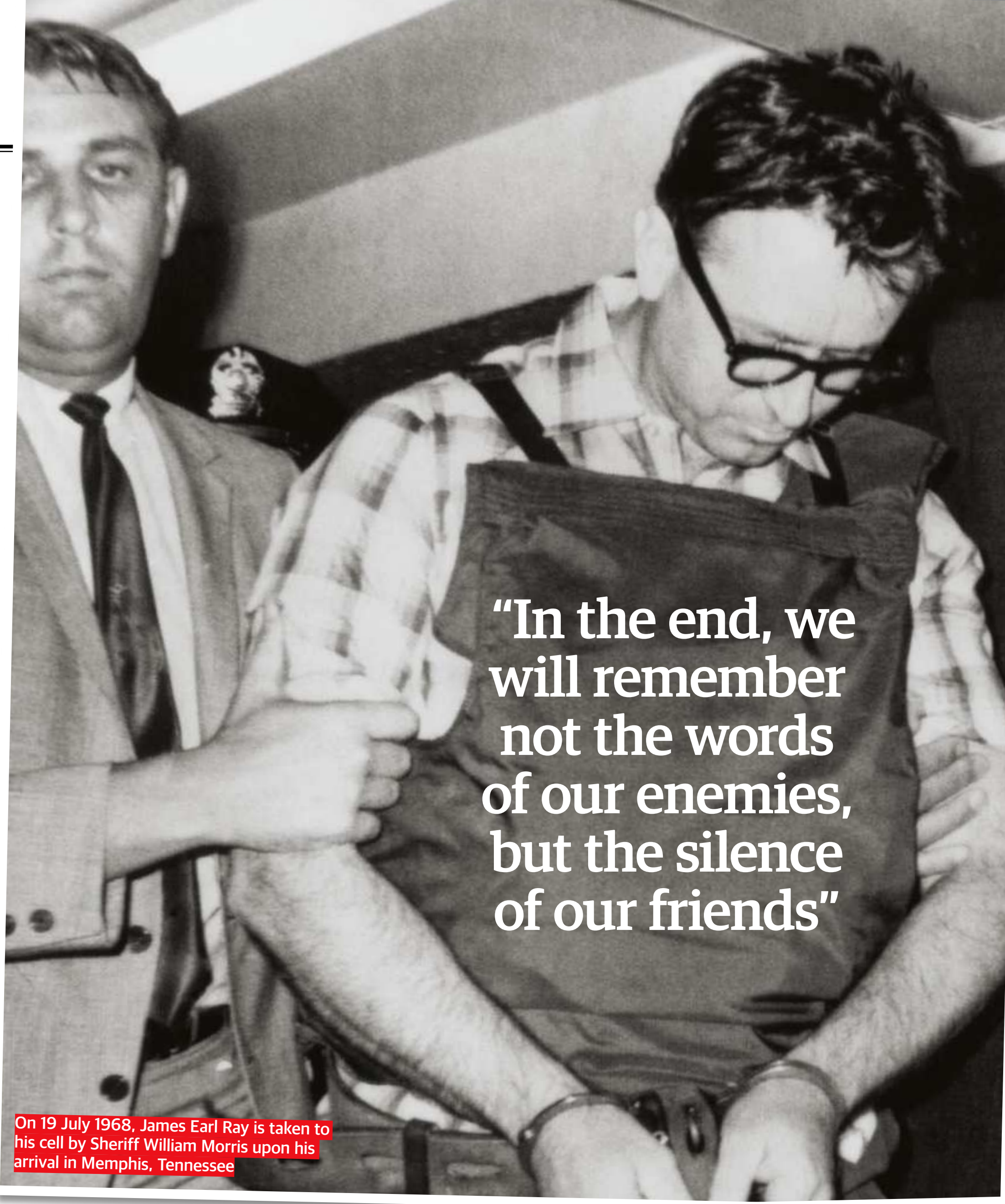
While he was born in Illinois, Ray and his family eventually relocated to Bowling Green, Missouri – a city with a considerable Ku Klux Klan presence. Drawn in by the radical yet influential views of the KKK, Ray reportedly embraced its racist views at a young age – it's these views, tempered by a life of poverty and crime, that may have driven Ray to kill one of the most prominent African Americans in the country's history.

HE WAS, AND ALWAYS HAD BEEN, A POOR MAN

Some believe that one of Ray's motives for the killing may have been purely financial. He'd been born into poverty and had struggled on the breadline for most of his life. Unable to find success in education, Ray's youth and subsequently his adulthood spiralled into a mixture of petty crime and prison spells. There's a possibility that the mysterious 'Raoul' character – who Ray was adamant had hired him to carry out the assassination – could have paid him to take the shot.

HE WANTED THE INFAMY

For most of his life, Ray had lived in inherent obscurity. Born into a life of abject poverty with little aptitude for education, Ray found a sense of twisted purpose and confidence as a criminal. There's a possibility that Ray, knowing the global media attention the death of King would garner, wanted the macabre celebrity status being an assassin would bring.



> "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends"

On 19 July 1968, James Earl Ray is taken to his cell by Sheriff William Morris upon his arrival in Memphis, Tennessee

On 8 April 1968, workers listen to the funeral of Martin Luther King Jr on a portable radio

DEATH NOT BE IN VAIN

After the assassination, demonstrators gather outside the White House

A soldier stands guard in Washington, DC after a building is destroyed by rioters

TRIAL AND AFTERMATH

With the country in a state of shock and national mourning, the attention of the world turned to the man who took the fatal shot

Within moments of firing the bullet that would take Martin Luther King Jr's life, James Earl Ray packed his rifle and other effects into a box, wrapped it in an old cloth and fled the boarding house he'd been using to stalk the minister. Dumping the bundled box outside a nearby amusement arcade, Ray had run to his white Mustang and sped out of Memphis as King lay dying on the first floor of the Lorraine Hotel.

In the days that followed, Ray acquired a Canadian passport under the false name of Ramon George Sneyd and took shelter in the city of Ontario. The FBI issued a warrant for his arrest, adding him to their notorious Most Wanted list while also putting an APB out on all of his known aliases. Two months later, on 8 June, while he was attempting to leave the United Kingdom, check-in staff realised the name Sneyd was on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police watch list. Airport officials also discovered a second passport on Ray under another assumed alias.

Ray was immediately arrested, and extradited to the United States a few days later. In the two months since his flight, the FBI had begun what would, at the time, become the most expensive investigation in the Bureau's history. The manhunt to find Ray had spread across five countries, bolstered by an international outcry at the senseless death of a pro-nonviolence campaigner. Now, with Ray finally in custody, the judicial process could begin.

But what evidence did the authorities have on Ray's involvement? What the prosecution had was purely circumstantial evidence, but all of it placed Ray at the scene of the murder. The rifle used to gun down King bore Ray's fingerprints, as did the binoculars he'd bought earlier that day and a newspaper he had read to gain information on King's whereabouts.

Ray initially confessed to everything to avoid a death sentence, but three days later he withdrew his guilty plea. According to Ray, a mysterious man called 'Raoul' (whom Ray had met in Canada) had orchestrated the entire operation, directing Ray to purchase a rifle and reserve a specific room at the Betty Brewster boarding house. Evidence of such a figure, beyond Ray's own testimony, was never found, and with Ray's troubled history with the law, the prosecution was assured of its confidence in Ray as the killer.

But what had led him into this position? Ever since his teenage years, Ray had been a habitual criminal. Bold but predominantly unsuccessful in his career, his rap sheet was a pockmarked road of armed robberies and thefts. He'd escaped from prison a number of times, including an excursion from Missouri State Prison the year before King was gunned down. Unafraid of wielding a weapon, Ray was described as fearless – but his crimes had never gone as far as murder. A petty thief, undoubtedly, but a killer?

Ray adamantly denied he killed King (a stand he kept until his death in 1998). However, despite the purely circumstantial evidence – including witnesses who identified Ray fleeing the scene – he was convicted of King's murder and sentenced to 99 years in prison.

So why was Ray convicted on such a slim case of evidence? Conspiracy theories continue to run rife as to the inner machinations of the prosecution's case, but one fact was clear: someone had to be made accountable. Five years earlier, the president himself had been gunned down in a similar fashion. Captured on film and immortalised in the minds of all, it left the nation shocked at the simple yet barbaric act of assassination. Much like King, JFK was a popular and charismatic figure and his very public execution galvanised the US into a common desire for justice.

JFK's death was a shocking twist against the backdrop of the Cold War; King's assassination, however shocking, united the nation in collective mourning. It didn't quell the violence perpetuated by the movement's more radical elements, but it did accelerate the road towards equality. Three months after his death, the Civil Rights Act was signed into law, finally ensuring the constitutional rights of every citizen against unlawful persecution and segregation.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

THE MYSTERIOUS 'RAOUL'

Ray remained adamant he had been hired by a man named Raoul. He had apparently met him in Canada and travelled with him to Memphis to oversee the hit. The FBI dismissed this claim, but in 1998 a retired FBI agent revealed he had found pieces of paper in Ray's car referring to such a suspect.

LLOYD JOWERS ORDERED THE HIT

One theory doesn't even include Ray as the shooter. It centres on Lloyd Jowers, who ran the Jim's Grill bar across the road from the Lorraine Motel where King was staying. Jowers, in 1993, claimed Memphis produce dealer Frank Liberto paid him $100,000 to hire a hitman – and it wasn't Ray.

IT WAS A GOVERNMENT HIT

According to Ray's last lawyer, William Pepper, the US government was behind it. In his book, The Truth Behind The Murder Of Martin Luther King, Pepper claims a mafia hitman was hired, with the CIA, the FBI and army intelligence all involved in the plot to halt King's influence and frame the unwitting Ray.

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"MY GOD, NOT AGAIN"

Just five years after his brother's infamous murder, presidential hopeful Robert Kennedy met a similarly tragic fate

Written by Jonathan O'Callaghan

The assassination of John F Kennedy in 1963 divided the US like never before, but five years later in 1968, there was a renewed hope in the nation. His brother, Robert Kennedy, had announced he would run for president, with the promise of healing the country still rocking from that fateful shooting. But lightning would strike twice, and sow deeper divisions than ever before, when a Kennedy brother was shot and killed by an assassin once again.

Robert Kennedy was the seventh of nine children parented by Joseph and Rose Kennedy. Born on 20 November 1925, he served in the US Navy before attending Harvard College, and in 1951 he graduated from the University of Virginia School of Law, whereafter he became a lawyer for the US Department of Justice. In 1950 he married Ethel Skakel, with whom he had 11 children.

When John became president in 1961, he appointed Robert as the United States' 64th attorney general. But just two years into the presidency, while Robert was at his family home in Virginia on 22 November 1963, he learned that his older brother had been shot. The president died in hospital later that same day, leaving a gaping void in the Kennedy family and sending a stunned and distraught country into mourning.

But Robert was resolute. He remained attorney general until September 1964, and that same year decided to run for a Senate seat for the Democrats in New York. Despite some fears about Robert publicly running for office, he was successfully elected in November 1964, and became senator for New York in January 1965.

Robert rapidly grew his stature within the Democratic party. He was noted for his support of the civil rights movement while attorney general, as well as doing what he could to help the poor. He also publicly stated his opposition to the escalation of American activity in the Vietnam War, and made numerous trips abroad to support human rights.

His stance as being anti-war and progressive earned him a lot of admirers. In March 1968 he announced he would run for president, with many hoping he could unite the country once again. "I do not run for the presidency merely to oppose any man, but to propose new policies," he said at the time. "I run because I am convinced that this country is on a perilous course and because I have such strong feelings about what must be done, and I feel that I'm obliged to do all I can."

Robert was running against Eugene McCarthy in the primaries, and he rapidly emerged as the front-runner. He won five of the six presidential primaries, with the last being in California. On 5 June 1968 he gave a victory speech at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, where the California Democratic Primary was held. But after finishing his speech, the Kennedys would be struck once more by tragedy, leading *Los Angeles Times* reporter Boris Yaro to proclaim: "My God, not again."

To avoid reporters, Robert was led through a kitchen hallway on his way out of the building. As he was ushered through the kitchen, a Palestinian man named Sirhan Sirhan emerged from behind an ice machine and fired eight shots at Robert from a revolver. Some of the bullets struck the presidential hopeful, while five other people were also wounded in the incident – including Robert's friend Paul Schrade, who was struck a glancing blow to the skull but miraculously survived.

Robert, however, was not so lucky. He fell to the floor wounded, but alive, even having the

> **"Sirhan emerged from behind an ice machine and fired eight shots at Robert from a revolver"**

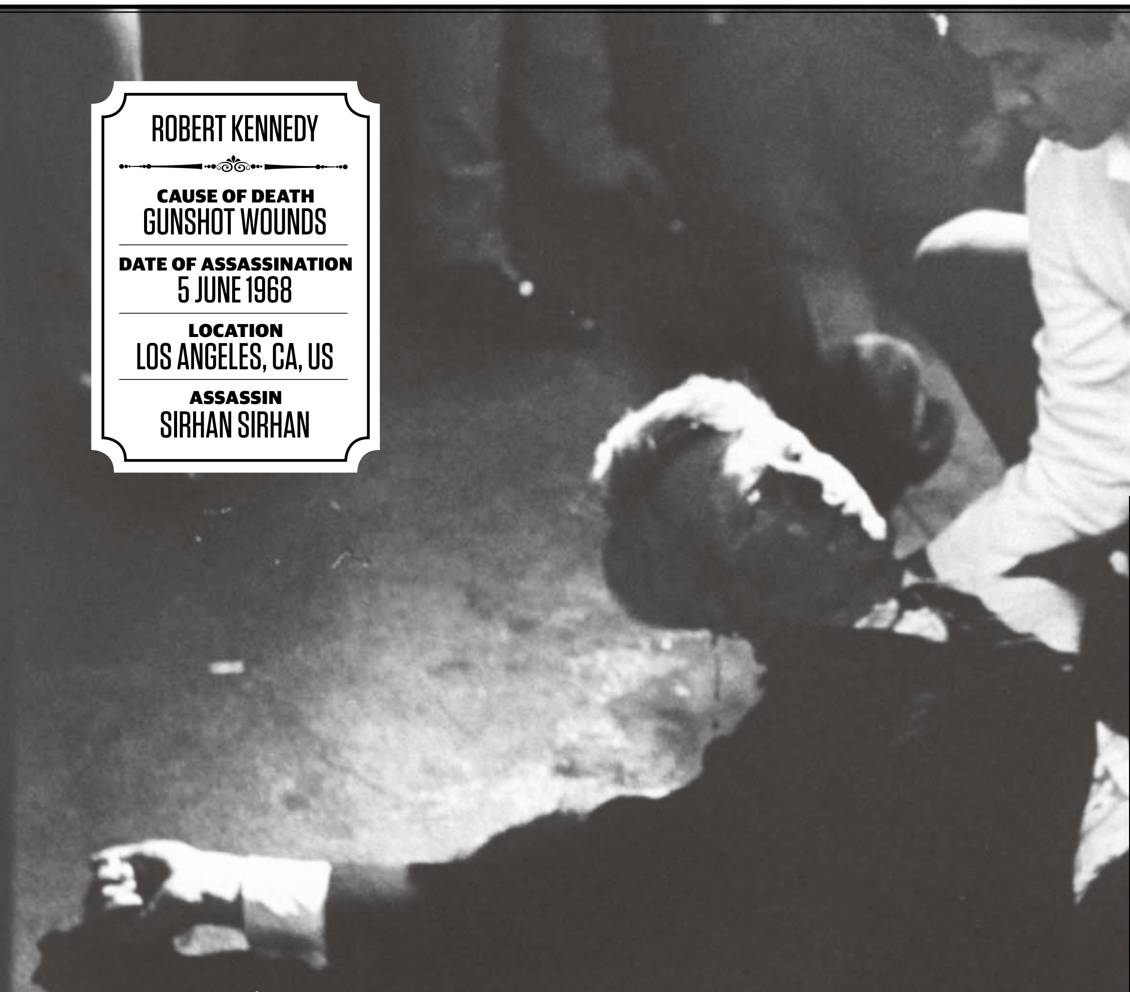
ROBERT KENNEDY

CAUSE OF DEATH
GUNSHOT WOUNDS

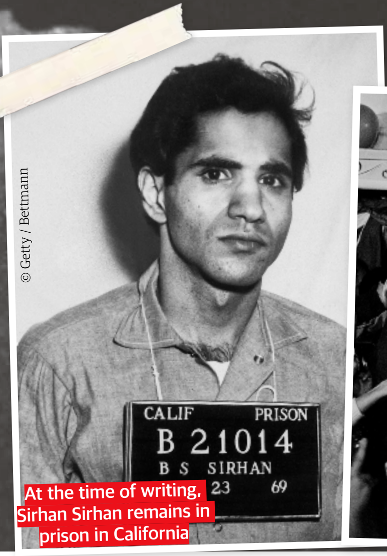
DATE OF ASSASSINATION
5 JUNE 1968

LOCATION
LOS ANGELES, CA, US

ASSASSIN
SIRHAN SIRHAN



Kennedy, pictured with busboy Juan Romera (right) after being shot



© Getty / Bettmann

At the time of writing, Sirhan Sirhan remains in prison in California

LOS ANGELES
Ambassador hote
Kenn

© Getty / David Hume Kennerly

Robert pictured prior to the assassination at his victory speech in California

presence of mind to ask if everyone was okay. But his wounds, including a shot to his head, were fatal. Ethel, who was three months pregnant at the time, was led to her husband's side. He was taken to the nearby Central Receiving Hospital, but passed away in the early hours of 6 June 1968.

Sirhan was convicted for Robert's murder on 17 April 1969, and while he was initially sentenced to death, his sentence was changed to life imprisonment in 1972. Sirhan said his motive for killing Robert was his support for Israel, believing that he meant to do harm to Sirhan's home of Palestine. However, his lawyers have also submitted a variety of other pleas over the years, including that he was framed or even hypnotised to perform the killing. Despite many appeals, Sirhan remains incarcerated in California. In August 2019, he was stabbed by a fellow inmate, but survived.

In Robert, the United States had lost another member of the Kennedy family, and one for whom high hopes had been placed for his upcoming run at being president. Killed just six months before turning 43, Robert was never able to enact his dream of unifying a divided country.

WHO REALLY KILLED ROBERT KENNEDY?

To this day, conspiracies surrounding tragic deaths in the Kennedy family continue to circulate, and Robert's murder is no exception

The death of Robert Kennedy has been the source of numerous conspiracy theories over the years, and there are some notable proponents of these ideas. One of his own sons, Robert F Kennedy Jr, believes that Sirhan did not act alone, but rather there was a second gunman. Paul Schrade, a friend of the assassinated presidential candidate, also believes there were other parties at play.

Sirhan has repeatedly claimed that he had no memory of killing Robert, leading some to suggest he may have been hypnotised into firing the gun. Another oddity is that based on witness testimony and analysis of audio recordings, there appear to have been 13 shots fired when Kennedy was killed. Sirhan's revolver, however, could only hold eight bullets. And further still, powder burns on Robert's jacket suggest the shots were fired at close range into his back, but some believe Sirhan did not get close enough to fire these.

There have been numerous re-examinations of the case over the years since. But while there are plausible explanations for Sirhan acting alone, not least the question of how a second gunman would have gone unnoticed to the throng of witnesses present, others remain convinced Robert's death was part of a bigger conspiracy.

© Wiki / Evan Freed

Some details of Robert Kennedy's assassination remain muddled

©Getty / Bill Eppridge

MILK AND MOSCONE MADE MARTYRS

The shocking murder of two progressive politicians was a defining moment for the city of San Francisco and the wider gay community

Written by Jonathan O'Callaghan

The assassinations of George Moscone and Harvey Milk in 1978 may have done more to change American opinions on gay rights than any other events. Killed in cold-blood by a crazed and vengeful former colleague, the murders sparked riots across San Francisco, and left a lasting impression on an increasingly liberal city that remains ever-present today.

Harvey Milk was born on 22 May 1930 in New York. He graduated from the New York State College for Teachers in 1951, before serving in the Korean War and later becoming a financial analyst. But it would be in 1972 – when he moved to San Francisco and opened a camera shop, Castro Camera – that he really made his mark. The store was situated on San Francisco's Castro Street, which was a haven for gay people in the city, and before long Milk had found himself ingrained in the local community.

Milk, who was openly gay, started to become interested in politics in 1973, not least when a local organisation called the Eureka Valley Merchants Association (EVMA) practised what he saw as discrimination against gay people. They asked him – and other gay business owners – for additional fees for their stores other stores to operate on Castro Street. Meanwhile, gay people in San Francisco were facing harassment from the police, with several altercations at local bars.

In 1973 Milk decided he had seen enough, and decided that it would take a gay person in public office to change things. So that year he decided to run for office, attempting to become one of San Francisco's 11 city supervisors. Elected by the entire city to represent a district, these people helped draft laws and legislation for San Francisco. Milk used his shop as the base for his campaign, drawing a large amount of support from local people in the area, running on a platform to prevent discrimination of gay people.

However, despite earning nearly 17,000 votes, Milk was unsuccessful in his bid to become elected. But the campaign had significantly raised his profile, making him one of the most vocal proponents of gay rights in San Francisco. On the back of this newfound popularity Milk dubbed himself 'The Mayor of Castro Street', and in 1974 organised a parade that attracted thousands of people and brought a significant amount of business to the area.

Milk's appetite for public office had not been abated, though. He became forming partnerships with local organisations, including running a boycott of Coors beer in bars that had refused to sign a contract with a union called the Teamsters. In 1975, he decided to run for supervisor again, this time with the support of a new liberal mayor for the city, George Moscone.

A candlelight vigil was held following the killings of Moscone and Milk

HARVEY MILK AND GEORGE MOSCONE

CAUSE OF DEATH
GUNSHOT WOUNDS

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
27 NOVEMBER 1978

LOCATION
SAN FRANCISCO, CA, USA

ASSASSIN
DANIEL WHITE

Harvey Milk was the first openly gay elected official in California

George Moscone was a progressive mayor who encouraged diversity and inclusivity in City Hall

All images © Getty / Bettmann

THE BATTLE FOR GAY RIGHTS

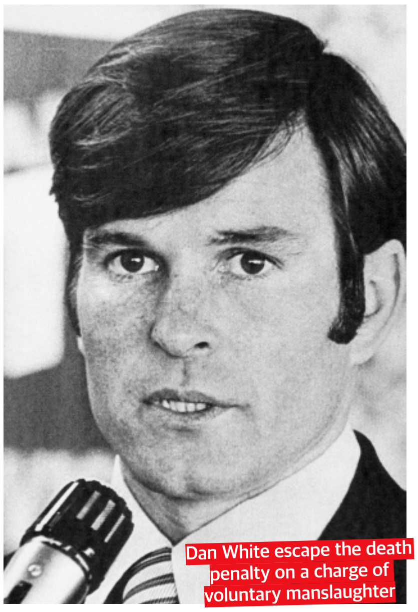
Harvey Milk became an influential figure in the fight for equality

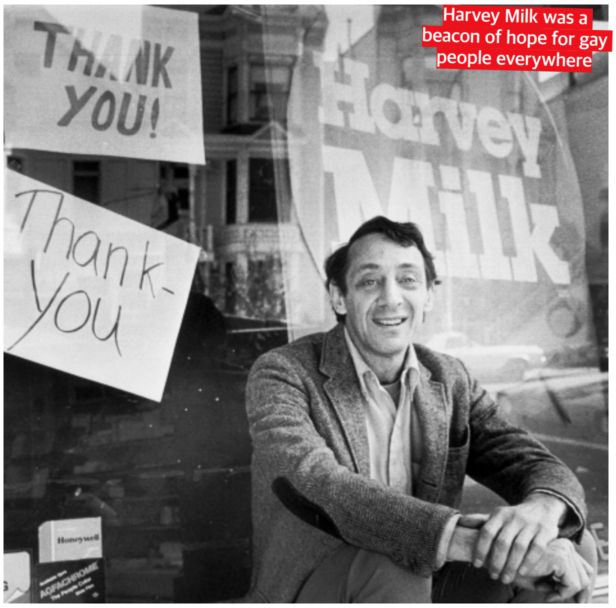
In the US in 1977, there was a growing conservative movement against gay rights. A staunch Christian singer called Anita Bryant began a national campaign to overturn legislation that prevented discrimination of teachers based on their sexual orientation, and in 1978 a California senator called John Briggs took this further. He proposed what was called 'Proposition 6', which would have made it illegal for gay people or anyone who supported gay rights to be a teacher. Briggs would often suggest that gay people were more likely to molest children and wanted to 'recruit' them to homosexuality.

Briggs and Milk clashed several times in those years in various public debates. With gay rights becoming a major issue in the US owing to the action of Bryant and Briggs, Milk found himself a key spokesperson for gay people everywhere. He would make impassioned speeches to crowds, often beginning with the line: "My name is Harvey Milk, and I want to recruit you." He urged gay people to come out to their friends and family, to try and make people more tolerant of homosexuality. In November that year, the efforts proved successful - Proposition 6 lost by more than 1 million votes.

Singer Anita Bryant was a major force of opposition against gay rights

> "Milk found himself a key spokesperson for gay people everywhere"


Dan White escape the death penalty on a charge of voluntary manslaughter



Harvey Milk was a beacon of hope for gay people everywhere

Moscone, born on 24 November 1929 in San Francisco, had practised law earlier in his life. He had become a city supervisor for San Francisco in 1963, with a number of liberal policies that included helping the poor and minorities, and being a proponent of gay rights. In 1966, he was elected to the California State Senate for the Democratic Party, and his reputation grew as an influential liberal politician. And in 1975, he fought off competition from conservative John Barbagelata to become the mayor of San Francisco.

Moscone and Milk soon struck up a partnership, with Milk lending the support of the gay community to Moscone's campaign for mayor, which he won by less than 5,000 votes. Despite support from Moscone, however, Milk failed in his second bid to become city supervisor in 1975, finishing seventh and thus one place away from making the board. Milk would become the first openly gay city commissioner in the US in 1976, however, when Moscone appointed him to the Board of Permit Appeals in 1976.

Milk spent just a few weeks on the board, as that same year he decided to run for the California State Assembly. He had significantly cleaned up his act, taking to wearing suits and avoiding drugs (although he supported the legalisation of cannabis). Facing some backlash from more established senior gay figures, Milk ran on a campaign of "Harvey Milk versus The Machine".

His drive and energy won him many plaudits, but he was ultimately unsuccessful in his bid to defeat Democrat Art Agnos, losing by a narrow margin of less than 4,000 votes. Agnos would give Milk some valuable advice, though, telling him to stop being a "downer" and to tell voters how he would make things better, not just talk about how bad things were at the moment. Milk took his advice on board, and it would not be long before he rose to national prominence.

It was in 1977 that Milk would make history. He decided that year to run for city supervisor again, and this time the system worked in his favour. Elections had changed from city-wide votes to regional votes, and with Milk's huge support in the Castro District, he easily swept to victory against 16 other candidates. On 8 November 1977 he became the first openly gay person to be voted into public office anywhere in the US.

Milk became an instant star across the US and a beacon of hope for gay people everywhere. On becoming city supervisor he received near unilateral support from the board of supervisors for a bill that made it illegal to discriminate based on sexual orientation. Only one of the 11 supervisors dissented, a man named Daniel White, who had fallen out with Milk when the latter had withdrawn support for preventing a mental health facility for young people being built in White's district.

White had been elected for the first time as a supervisor alongside Milk, and having been a former police officer he drew considerable support from the service. He complained about the low pay of supervisors, however, and said it was not enough

The life and death of Harvey Milk

1930
- Harvey Milk is born in Woodmere, New York to a Lithuanian Jewish family.
22 May 1930

1972
- Milk moves with his lover to San Francisco, which was becoming a haven for gay people.
2 February 1972

1973
- Milk loses the election in his first attempt to become a city supervisor.
3 November 1973

1975
- For a second time, Milk is unsuccessful in being elected as city supervisor, despite large support in the Castro District.
10 November 1975

Tens of thousands of people took to the streets following the murders

to support his family. He also clashed regularly with Milk, with the two rarely seeing eye to eye. Milk, meanwhile, was riding a wave of support. He was not only hugely popular with the gay people of San Francisco - who made up a significant proportion of the city's population of 750,000 - but he also gained wider public support for an initiative to make dog owners pick up their pets' mess (a major irritation amongst citizens at the time) which became known as the 'pooper scooper law'.

Milk was riding a huge wave of public support, and was seen as one of the leading figures in the gay rights movement in the US. It was clear he would play a key role in the growing movement, perhaps on a par with other leading civil rights activists in the US. That was until November 1978, when residents of San Francisco were greeted to shocking news that would change the city forever.

On 10 November 1978, White resigned, citing low pay as his reason. But days later he changed his mind and asked for his job back. While Moscone had initially agreed, he decided against it after consulting with the other supervisors. On 27 November, Moscone was set to announce White's replacement in a press conference.

That same day, White armed himself with a revolver and climbed through a window in the basement of City Hall, to avoid the metal detectors. He walked to Moscone's office and requested a meeting with the mayor. When the two were alone, White shot and killed Moscone with repeated shots to his body and his chest. Before anyone noticed, White left the room and went to find Milk and asked for a private meeting in his office. When the door closed, White fired five shots at Milk, including in the head, killing him instantly.

Dianne Feinstein, who was the president of the board of supervisors at the time, found Milk's dead body in his office. She checked for a pulse but found none, and later announced to a stunned press: "Both Mayor Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk have been shot and killed. The suspect is Supervisor Dan White."

Tens of thousands of people attended a candlelight vigil that night from the Castro District to City Hall. White, meanwhile, turned himself in after initially fleeing the scene. But more drama was set to come on 21 May 1979, when he received his sentence. His defence had argued (to a jury of mostly conservative, white people) that White had been under intense mental duress at the time and was suffering with depression. Some reports erroneously stated that White's lawyers argued he had eaten junk food the night before, which had altered his mental state. This became known as the 'Twinkie Defense'.

White only received a seven-year prison sentence for the lesser charge of voluntary manslaughter, rather than facing the death penalty or life imprisonment for murder. The verdict enraged the people of San Francisco, sparking the White Night riots that evening as the gay community took to the streets around City Hall. The police decided not to intervene, fearing it might lead to more violence.

White was released from prison on parole after just five years, and later told a reporter that he intended to kill a further two people on that fateful day in City Hall. Some referred to White as "the most hated man in San Francisco" upon his release. He committed suicide on 21 October 1985.

The killings of Milk and Moscone, meanwhile, stunned San Francisco, and still reverberate today. In death, Milk became an everlasting symbol of the gay rights movement in the US, and his memory will not long be forgotten.

1976

Milk loses another election, narrowly missing out on being elected to the California State Assembly.
5 November 1976

1977

Finally Harvey White is successful, and he is elected as a city supervisor for San Francisco.
8 November 1977

1978

Milk succeeds in passing a gay rights bill to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation.
10 February 1978

1978

Milk is assassinated by former city supervisor Dan White, along with mayor George Moscone.
27 November 1978

1979

White is sentenced to just seven years in prison on a manslaughter charge, leading to the White Night riots.
21 May 1979

1985

White commits suicide, having been released from prison after serving just five years.
21 October 1985

All images © Getty / Bettmann

DEATH OF A DREAMER

The death of Beatles legend John Lennon was more than murder, it was the assassination of a musician who was worshipped by millions

Written by Martyn Conterio

On a cold December night in 1980, at the entrance to the Dakota building on West 72nd Street, a man stood lurking. At the time, the historic apartment block was just another upscale residence for celebrities and the wealthy – including former-Beatle John Lennon. But in an instant the Dakota was transformed into a site of enduring infamy.

It was common knowledge the musician was open to fans approaching him. Autograph hunters would congregate outside the Dakota, hoping to catch a glimpse of the star. He was kind enough to often sign autographs and pose for photos. Yet Lennon's good-natured openness and the lack of security – because why would anybody want to harm him? – allowed a killer right into his midst.

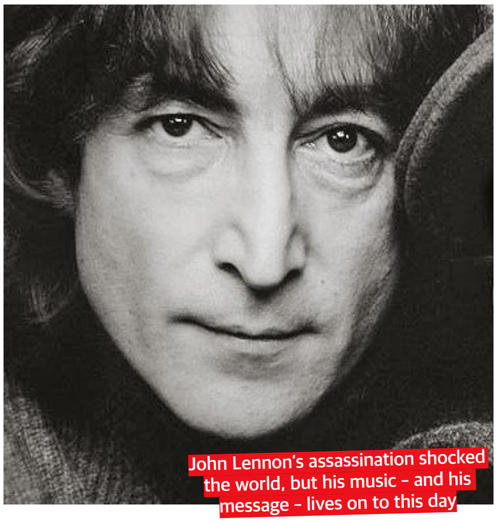
Mark David Chapman was a die-hard Beatles fan, and a troubled individual. For a while he'd become increasingly incensed by Lennon (in his eyes, the group's most controversial member, particularly for his "more popular than Jesus" remarks) and began to plot against him. Chapman did not intend to merely harm Lennon, he was hell-bent on murder. To do this he purchased hollow-point bullets, fired from a Charter Arms snub-nosed .38 Special. Hollow-point bullets are used for their accuracy and the devastation they cause on impact. They explode. When hitting and entering soft tissue and organs, the damage is irreparable.

What's remarkable is Chapman had in fact met Lennon just a few hours before he pulled the gun on his former hero and took his life. Lennon had signed a copy of Chapman's *Double Fantasy* LP, and the star been so nice that the eventual assassin momentarily dithered. "Is that all?" Lennon asked. While he meant "Is there anything else you'd like me to sign?" The former Beatle's question echoes with a cruel irony. Chapman had the gun on him at this time, but the encounter – so close and personal – put him off doing it there and then.

As Lennon and his wife Yoko Ono reappeared at the Dakota, Chapman made eye contact with his target, waited a moment, then struck without a word. He shot five times, the rock idol struck twice in the lower back and twice in the left shoulder area. One shot missed entirely.

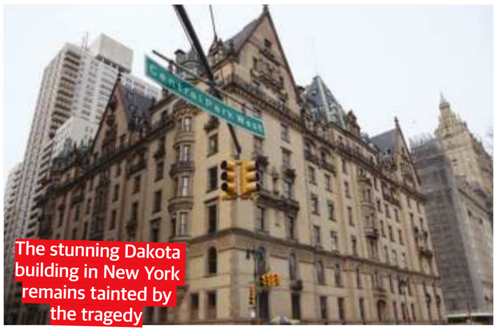
John Lennon was later pronounced dead at Roosevelt Hospital, surgeons unable to save him. Chapman did not flee the crime scene, he simply stood and read his copy of *Catcher in the Rye* and went with the police quietly.

The senseless assassination shocked the world. Sporting events and television broadcasts were interrupted with special news bulletins. The world was left reeling and millions felt robbed of a man whose work defined an era and shaped the course of music history – a sentiment which has not diminished in time.



John Lennon's assassination shocked the world, but his music – and his message – lives on to this day

© Jack Mitchell



The stunning Dakota building in New York remains tainted by the tragedy

JOHN LENNON

CAUSE OF DEATH
GUNSHOT WOUNDS

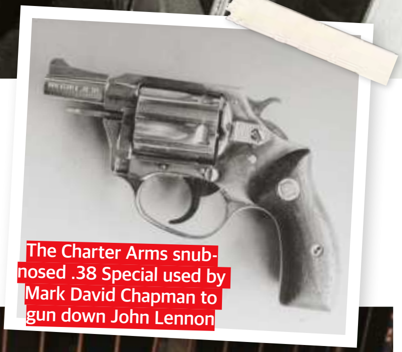
DATE OF ASSASSINATION
8 DECEMBER 1980

LOCATION
NEW YORK, NY, USA

ASSASSIN
MARK DAVID CHAPMAN

Within an hour of the news breaking, Beatles fans congregated at the entrance to the Dakota

Despite many appeals for parole, Mark David Chapman remains incarcerated at Wende Correctional Facility in New York



The Charter Arms snub-nosed .38 Special used by Mark David Chapman to gun down John Lennon

Fans often gather at the Strawberry Fields memorial on Lennon's birthday and the anniversary of his death

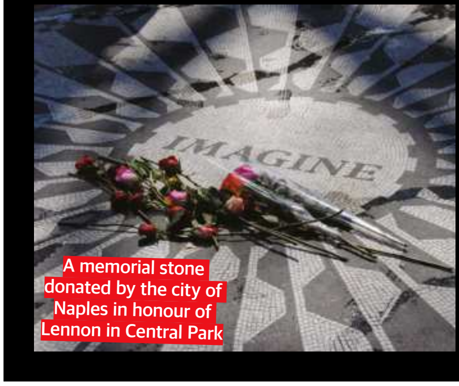
STRAWBERRY FIELDS FOREVER

Dedicated to Lennon on what would have been his 45th birthday, Central Park's memorial is a stone's throw from the Dakota

In 1981, a patch in New York's major green space was formerly dubbed Strawberry Fields in the late musician's honour, named so after one of The Beatles' most famous tracks. It was then decided by Central Park authorities this area would be completely redesigned. Ono put the kibosh on a statue, preferring something more thoughtful and interesting: a living memorial. On what would have been John Lennon's 45th birthday, 9 October 1985, a ceremony was held in Central Park, led by his widow Yoko Ono, to formally open the newly renovated Strawberry Fields.

Strawberry Fields, a 2.5-acre spot, was designed by landscape architect Bruce Kelly, working with Ono, to create a space where people could contemplate life and even meditate. Sitting right across, as it does, from the Dakota, Strawberry Fields offers fans something more tranquil and uplifting than the sadness associated with the Dakota building.

The black-and-white Portuguese pavement-style mosaic memorial stone was donated by the city of Naples and reads 'Imagine', another reference to one of Lennon's songs, arguably his most well-known of all. John Lennon died an unnecessarily violent death at the hands of a maniac, but his 1960s counter-culture-influenced values inspire fans to this day.



A memorial stone donated by the city of Naples in honour of Lennon in Central Park

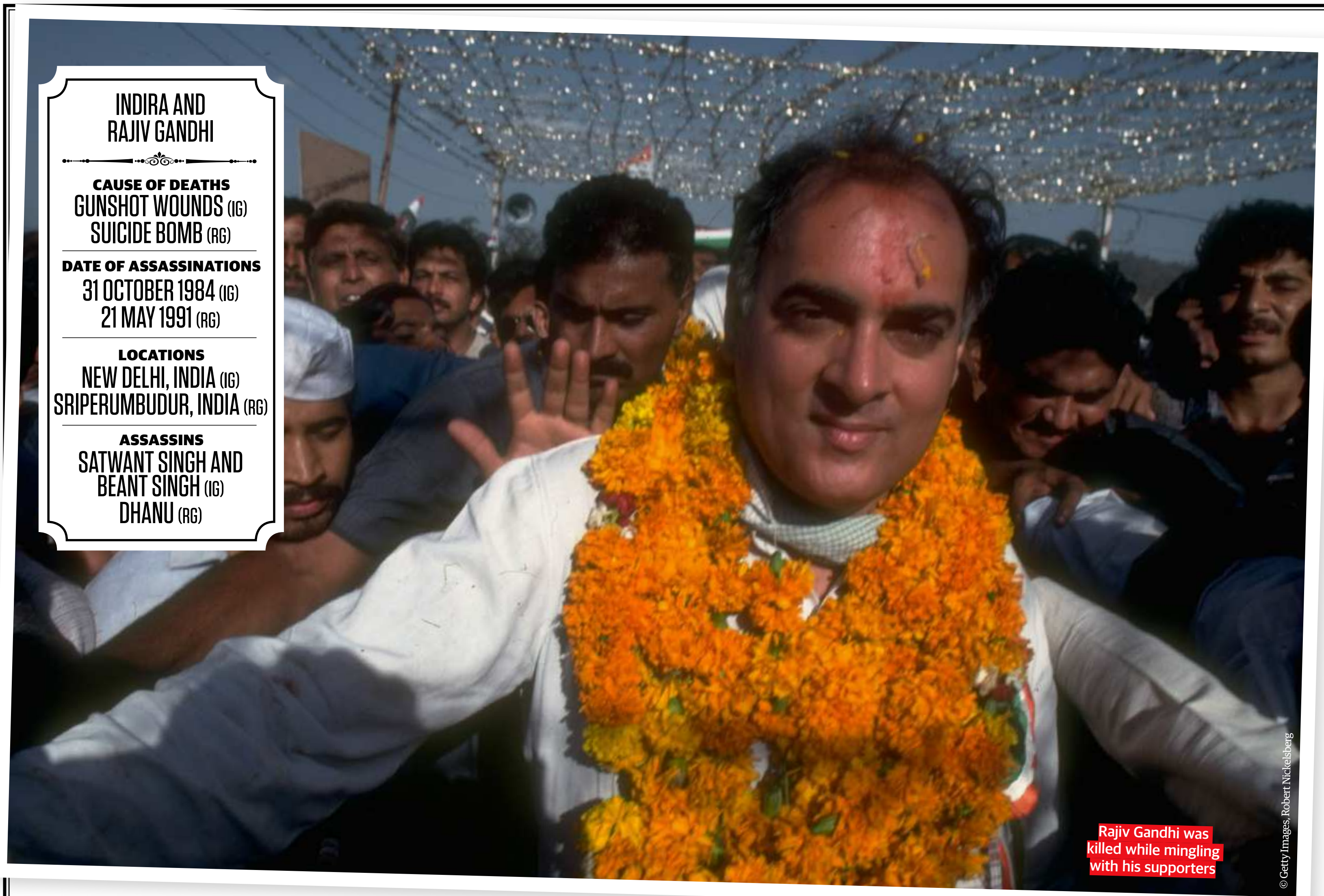
INDIRA AND RAJIV GANDHI

CAUSE OF DEATHS
GUNSHOT WOUNDS (IG)
SUICIDE BOMB (RG)

DATE OF ASSASSINATIONS
31 OCTOBER 1984 (IG)
21 MAY 1991 (RG)

LOCATIONS
NEW DELHI, INDIA (IG)
SRIPERUMBUDUR, INDIA (RG)

ASSASSINS
SATWANT SINGH AND BEANT SINGH (IG)
DHANU (RG)



Rajiv Gandhi was killed while mingling with his supporters

© Getty Images, Robert Nickelsberg

DEATH OF A DYNASTY

Mother and son Indira and Rajiv Gandhi both served as prime minister of India, and both met violent ends

Written by Michael Simpson

Indira Gandhi and her son Rajiv came from a line of distinguished Indian politicians. Indira's grandfather was Motilal Nehru, an influential campaigner for India's independence from Britain in 1947, while her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, was independent India's first prime minister.

Born in 1917, Indira rose rapidly through the ranks of India's Congress Party, becoming the party's president in 1959 and a government minister in 1964. Only two years later she became India's first - and so far, only - female prime minister.

Internal policy disputes led to Indira being expelled from the Congress Party in 1969, but the level of support she had in the party allowed her to form a breakaway faction and stay on as prime minister. It wasn't just Indira's popularity that would keep her in power, however. In 1975 an Indian court found her guilty of violating election laws and said she should be banned from politics for six years. Unwilling to accept the verdict, Indira declared a state of emergency that lasted for two years. Her steadfastness cost her when new elections were held in 1977. Her party was roundly defeated.

Indira was determined to become prime minister again, and did so in 1980. Still, that was to be her fateful final term and the same resolve that kept her in power before would be her downfall this time. In June 1984 she sent troops into the Golden Temple at Amritsar to crush a group of Sikh separatists that had occupied the building. India's Sikhs were angered by what they saw as a violation of their holiest shrine and by the death and damage the assault caused. On 31 October, a group of them got revenge. As Indira was walking through her garden in New Delhi on her way to an interview with actor Peter Ustinov, two of her Sikh bodyguards, Satwant Singh and Beant Singh, shot her multiple times, killing her.

Satwant was arrested while Beant was killed by police soon after the assassination. Across the country, many innocent Sikhs also died in violent attacks as Indira's supporters sought revenge. Although Satwant and Beant were the killers, they weren't working alone. Indira's personal secretary, Rajinder Kumar Dhawan, was initially implicated in her murder but he was eventually cleared of all charges by Rajiv Gandhi after the latter became prime minister. A conviction for conspiracy was secured, however, against Beant's nephew, Kehar Singh, a government clerk, who was hanged with Satwant in 1989.

The site where Indira Gandhi was shot is now a memorial

© Vinayaraj [Wikipedia]

India's political dynasty: Indira Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sanjay Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi

© Wikimedia Commons, Royroydeb

The oldest of Indira's two son's, Rajiv took over as prime minister after his mother's death. He was 40, making him the youngest person to take over that office. He would serve as India's PM for the next five years, but it would be a bumpy ride. The 1984 Bhopal gas leak disaster, corruption allegations and military action against the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka led to defeat for his party in the 1989 general election.

Even so, the electorate didn't abandon Rajiv and his 1991 re-election campaign drew big crowds. Some Tamils were less forgiving, however, and took advantage of his willingness to meet his supporters face-to-face. On 21 May 1991, at a rally in Sriperumbudur in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, Rajiv was greeted by 17-year-old Thenmozhi Rajaratnam. As she bent down to touch his feet, she set off a bomb hidden in her clothes. Rajiv and at least 14 other people were killed.

An investigation showed that the actions of Rajaratnam, also known as Dhanu, were the well-rehearsed culmination of a long-planned conspiracy. Several arrests followed and death sentences were given to convicted conspirators. Yet, no-one was ever executed for the crime and in 2014 the last three prisoners on death row had their sentences commuted. As of 2018, the assassination was still being investigated by Indian authorities amid suspicions that the true ringleaders have never been caught.

THE TIGERS RAJIV GANDHI COULDN'T TAME

Rajiv Gandhi's actions while prime minister antagonised the Tamil Tigers, a militant group who took their revenge by taking his life

The Tamil Tigers was established in 1976 by Velupillai Prabhakaran to force the government of Sri Lanka to give the Tamil people an independent homeland. Formally known as The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the Tamil Tigers were active from the 1970s to 2009 when the Sri Lankan government defeated the group.

The Tigers extremist actions led to them being declared a terrorist group by several nations. These acts included not only the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi but also the killing of Sri Lanka's President, Ranasinghe Premadasa, in May 1993, a deadly suicide bomb attack on the central bank in the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, in 1996, and an attack on that city's International Airport in 2001.

Rajiv Gandhi's decision to send the Indian Peacekeeping Force to Sri Lanka in the late 1980s to disarm the Tigers was a set-back for the organisation. It was only temporary, however, and crossing the Tigers would cost Gandhi his life. There was hope in the early 2000s that ceasefires signed with the government would end the violence, but those didn't hold. The fighting continued until a government military offensive in 2009 killed Prabhakaran and ended the Tigers' deadly campaign.

The Tamil Tigers recruited men, woman and children to fight for their cause

© Getty Images, Roger Hutchings

HAUTE COUTURE KILLER

Over three months, Andrew Cunanan killed five men: a friend, a lover, two strangers and fashion legend Gianni Versace. To this day, no one knows why

Written by Tanita Matthews

GIANNI VERSACE

CAUSE OF DEATH
GUNSHOT WOUNDS

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
15 JULY 1997

LOCATION
MIAMI BEACH, FL, USA

ASSASSIN
ANDREW CUNANAN

Gianni Versace walked the short distance from his Casa Casuarina mansion in Ocean Drive, Florida, to the News Cafe where he would often stop for a morning beverage. At the cafe's newsstand, he purchased five magazines: *Vogue, Business Week, The New Yorker, Entertainment Weekly* and *People*. With his print purchases in hand, he walked back to his home, a three-storey Mediterranean-style building that had been remodelled extensively. Versace adored his home in the Miami Beach neighbourhood; he said it was where he felt safest. But as the middle-aged icon ascended the stone steps outside the large steel gates, 27-year-old Andrew Cunanan walked up behind him, raised a 40-calibre gun to his head and squeezed the trigger twice. He lodged one bullet into the back of Versace's skull and the other blew through his left cheek. Those who witnessed Versace's body crash to the ground spoke of how the blood was "coming out of him like crazy." Cunanan dashed from the scene. Versace was the fifth victim targeted by a man whose life, which he had fashioned for himself from lies and infamy, was crumbling around him.

IL DIVO

Cunanan was born into a humble Christian family in southwest California. His father served in the navy and his mother was a telephone operator. Although the youngest of four children, he was a smart infant with an IQ of 147. He was also charming, charismatic and gifted with a clean-cut and attractive look. His parents worked hard to provide a better life for their children, climbing the economic ladder one rung at a time – moving from the working-class area of National City to Rancho Bernardo, and then to Bonita. But as Cunanan matured he became a prolific liar who fabricated stories about his family and personal life, always wanting to convince the other children that he had more or was something other than what he really was.

At Bishop's School in La Jolla, a private institution that cost his family $9,000 a year in tuition, Cunanan's personality began to reflect the proud gay man that he saw himself to be. Vying for attention and notoriety, Cunanan played the part well, dressing in a red-patent leather jumpsuit for a school dance that had been provided by his older, male date. For the picture in his school yearbook, he posed in an unbuttoned white shirt to display his chiselled physique. However, while others listed their accomplishments next to their photographs, Cunanan's yearbook page was fairly blank. Next to his picture was the quote, "Apres moi, le deluge" ('After me, the storm') as believed to have been said by King Louis XV. His classmates dubbed him 'Most likely to be remembered'.

But at home, life was not as Cunanan fantasised. His father, who had left the navy to become a stockbroker, went back to his native Philippines to avoid being arrested for embezzlement, leaving his family to fend for themselves. Abandoned by his father, Cunanan grew bitter, angry and resentful. During an argument with his mother about his sexuality, Cunanan threw her against a wall, bruising her and dislocating her shoulder. He dropped out of University in San Diego where he was studying American History and flew out to see his father, but returned "disgusted" that the man who had always encouraged him to strive for bigger and better things was living in "squalid conditions". Back home in the US, he settled in San Francisco, visiting high-class gay bars and selling sex to older, wealthy closet homosexuals.

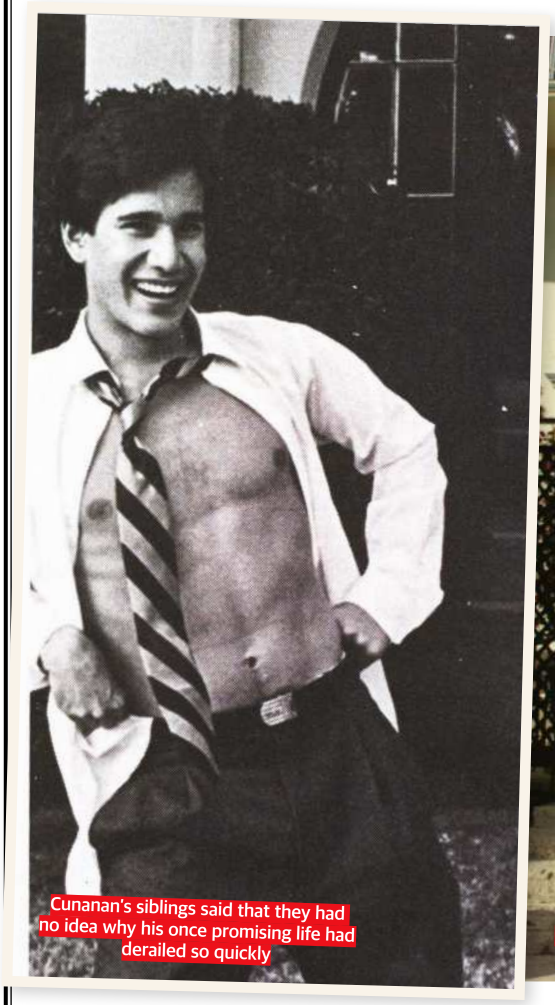
Cunanan's life became all about glitz and glamour, and he assumed a variety of personas: Andrew Desilva, as most of his friends knew him, was a Hollywood hotshot with a Riviera mansion; Lieutenant Commander Cummings, a naval officer and graduate of Choate and Yale, dined in fancy restaurants, dressed to the nines, puffed on contraband cigars and sipped the finest champagne. But appearances can often be deceiving. Unemployed and completely dependent on the finances of his wealthy 'lovers', Cunanan's lifestyle, like much of his life, was a smokescreen for his shortcomings.

"Unemployed and completely dependent on the finances of his wealthy 'lovers', Cunanan's lifestyle was a smokescreen for his shortcomings"

To Cunanan, there had only ever been one true love in his life: a man named David Madson. However, although dazzled by his lover's glitzy life at first, Madson began to distance himself from Cunanan after he grew suspicious of his reluctance to give him a phone number or an address at which to contact him. In reality, Cunanan was at that time a kept man by his latest 'benefactor', living in a $900,000 house with a $2,500-a-week allowance. But when his sugar daddy grew tired of his company and dumped him, his friends began to suspect that Cunanan was selling and taking drugs. He also began to explore sexually through sadomasochism; he wanted to be in control in all aspects of his life. But with little money, Cunanan piled on the weight and became less attractive, and began moping about not being able to get a date. He was ready to leave his withered life behind and travel to be with his closest friends, his one true love Madson and Jeffrey Trail, who lived in Minnesota.

IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Cunanan arrived in Minneapolis in late April 1997. As a welcome party, he and Madson went out to dinner with Madson's friends, and while some fawned over the charming Cunanan, others were less impressed, considering him a pompous, name-dropping egomaniac. Two days later, Cunanan invited Trail to Madson's apartment. The extent to which Trail was involved with Cunanan varies depending on who tells the story: some claim that Trail, a former San Diego navy officer,



Cunanan's siblings said that they had no idea why his once promising life had derailed so quickly

Versace purchased the Miami Beach mansion in 1992 for $2.95 million was sexually involved with Cunanan and had flown into a jealous rage upon learning he had been unfaithful with Madson; others suggest Trail was more of a big brother to Cunanan, and had expressed his avid disapproval at him for taking so many drugs.

One neighbour in the building told police they heard the two arguing in the apartment before someone shouted, "Get the fuck out…" followed by a door slamming and several deep thuds lasting for approximately 30 seconds, then silence. However the story played out, the end result was Trail being bludgeoned to death by more than two dozen blows to the face and head with a hammer.

Later, Madson's work colleagues stopped by the apartment, concerned that he had not shown up for work for two days. Both thought they heard whispering behind the apartment's front door as well as Madson's dog whining. Worried about their friend, they left a message with the apartment block's superintendent Jennifer Wiberg, asking her to access Madson's apartment with her passkey. When she checked inside, she came across a macabre scene.

There was blood splattered all over the back of the door next to a dent in the wall, brain matter lodged in the door frame, two sets of bloody footprints and a body rolled up in an oriental rug. It was Trail. His wallet was still tucked inside his back pocket and his pager clipped to his belt. His watch was frozen at 9.55pm, the time police believed he blocked a strike from the hammer wielded by his attacker, which was thought to have come from a red toolbox in the apartment.

Although the attack was horrific, at the time it was not thought to be pre-meditated. There was no urine or faeces in the apartment, indicating Madson's dog had been regularly taken out over the last few days. Police thought the killer may have been waiting for an opportunity to dispose of the body? Had such a time failed to arise and they simply slipped away?

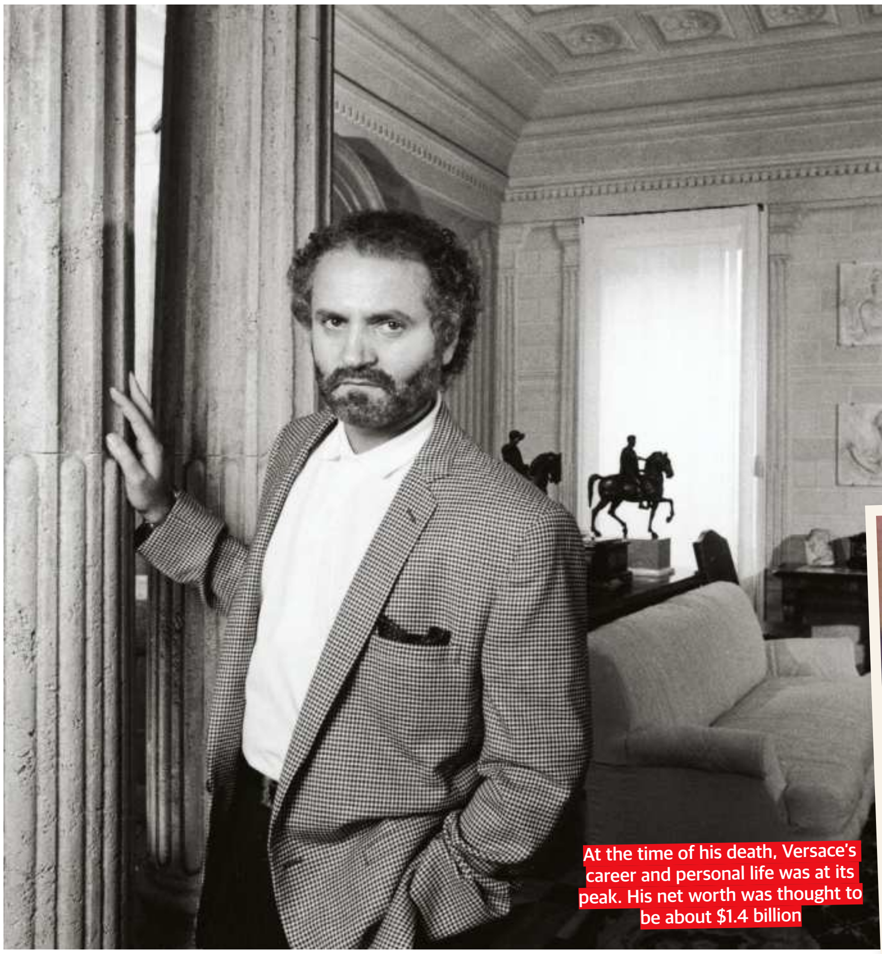
Two days after police discovered Trail's body, Cunanan drove with Madson to a lake approximately 80 kilometres north of Minneapolis. There, using Trail's handgun, he pumped several bullets into the head of the man he once described as "the love of his life." Cunanan fled the scene in Madson's Red Jeep, heading towards Chicago. When he got there, he managed to gain access to the home of Lee Miglin, a 72-year-old real-estate tycoon. Cunanan was in need of a new getaway vehicle, fresh clothes and money, and it seems that Miglin got in his way. He was subjected to sadistic torture by Cunanan, eventually dying. Cunanan had wrapped Miglin's head in masking tape, leaving only a small slit at the nose to allow him to breathe, similar to an S&M mask. He then repeatedly stabbed him in the chest with gardening sheers and slit his throat with a gardening saw blade.

Cunanan then went east to New Jersey in Miglin's green 1994 Lexus and with $2,000 in cash. Police attempted to track down the vehicle, but Cunanan had spent his life remaining one step ahead of everyone else. One friend described how, while some people would put pennies in their penny loafers, "Andrew would put in dimes."

William Reese was next to suffer the same fate as Madson at the hands of Cunanan, who made off in his victim's red 1996 Chevy pickup truck, desperate to throw the police off his scent. After slaying his fourth victim, Cunanan earned himself a place on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list. He stopped off briefly in New York to change the car's licence plate, before heading to Miami Beach, where he checked into a rundown hotel. Here, he evaded capture for two months, emerging at night to scout potential love interests in gay bars. During the day he would hide himself away in the room, feasting on takeaway pizza and subs, poring over the pages of fashion magazines and indulging in S&M pornography.

OUT WITH A BANG

Why Cunanan targeted Versace will never be known. Some have suggested that it was because



At the time of his death, Versace's career and personal life was at its peak. His net worth was thought to be about $1.4 billion

Hundreds of sightings came in of Cunanan from across the US

Despite being rushed to the Ryder Trauma Center, Versace was pronounced dead at 9.15am. He was just 50 years old he grew jealous of the Miami Beach VIP who lived the kind of life Cunanan could only dream of. It was rumoured that Cunanan and Versace had in fact met on one occasion when Versace mistook the gigolo for someone else. Cunanan, who loved to be in the spotlight, allegedly did not correct Versace but played along for the brief duration of the conversation. But on 15 July 1997, as Versace put the key into the gates of his mansion, Cunanan executed his final victim. Versace's long-time partner Antonio D'Marco raced out of the mansion, having heard the gunshots, to find the bloody body of his partner at the base of the steps. He and a few others attempted to chase Cunanan down, but he brandished his gun at them, warning them to stay away before making off once again. After being taken to Jackson Memorial Hospital, Versace was declared dead.

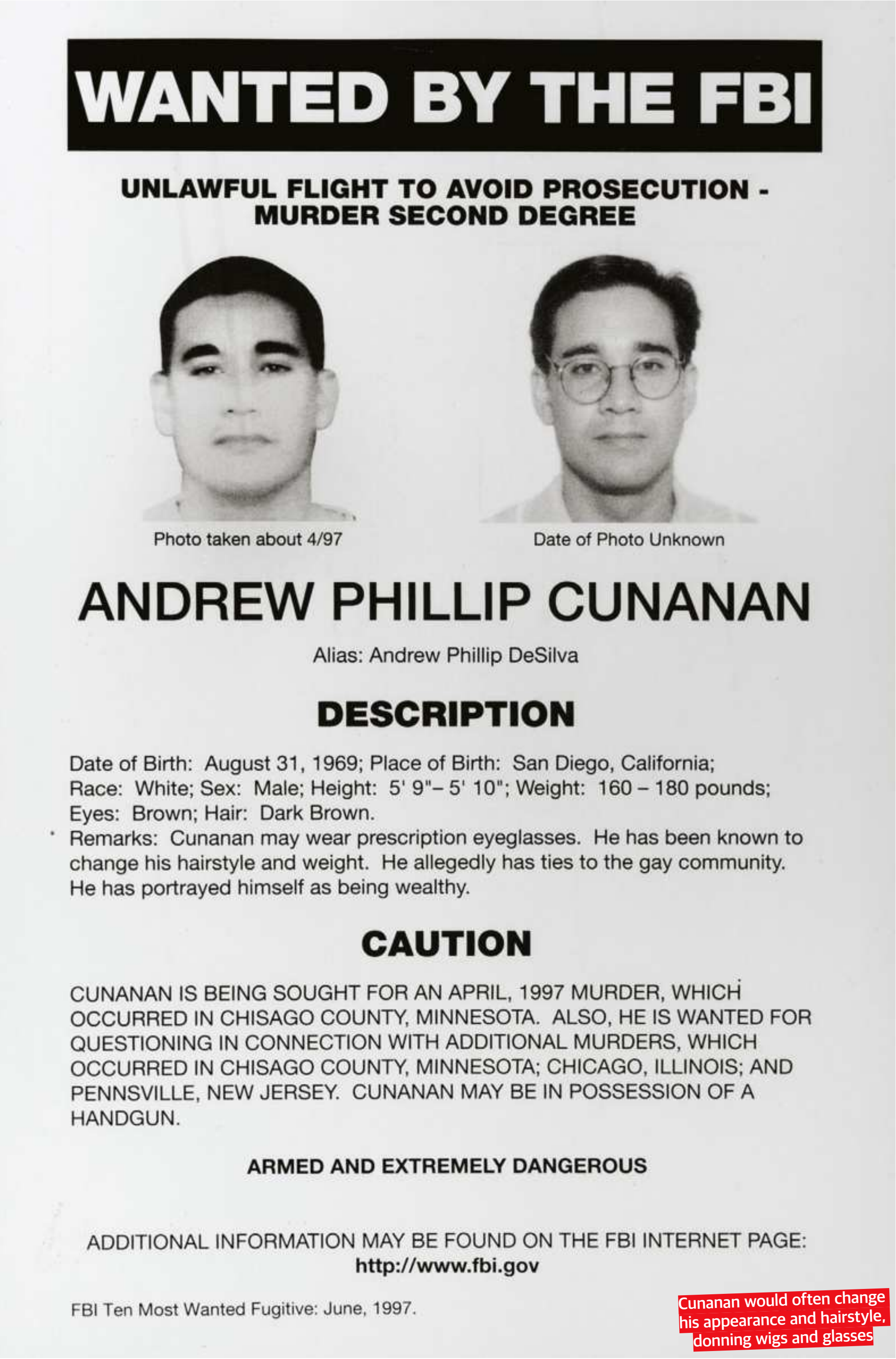
With yet another innocent victim killed by the spree killer, the manhunt for Cunanan intensified. Hours after Versace's death, police discovered a pawnshop ticket in their department clerk's desk with Cunanan's name and address on it and rushed to the hotel in the hope of capturing him. While on the run, Cunanan had pawned a gold coin belonging to Miglin. He had used his real name, his location in the downtown hotel and given a thumbprint, as was required with all pawnshops in the US. The pawnshop had submitted the ticket as protocol to the Miami police a week before Versace was shot, but it had been lost beneath a pile of paperwork and remained undiscovered. The opportunity to capture Cunanan had merely been missed, and it was not the first time. After Cunanan had featured on the television programme America's Most Wanted four days before Versace's murder, an employee at a sandwich shop came face to face with the man police were fiercely searching for in connection with four murders. He excused himself and called the police, but before they arrived, Cunanan slipped away.

> **"As Versace put the key into the gates of his mansion, Cunanan executed his final victim"**

The red pickup truck was discovered along with Cunanan's belongings inside at the hotel: a passport, a personal cheque and a copy of his pawnshop ticket, but Cunanan was gone. Eight days after Versace's slaying, a caretaker checked in on a boathouse in Miami, as he did every couple of days to ensure the place was in order while the owners were away on business. Before he had even walked through the door, he knew that something was wrong - the front door was slightly ajar. Investigating inside, he discovered Cunanan hiding out and retreated outside in terror to call the police.

Almost every police officer in the city, along with journalists and news crews, gathered outside, waiting to see if it was another victim or Cunanan himself. In an intense standoff, police deployed teargas through the houseboat before charging inside. In the top floor bedroom lay Cunanan, face up in his boxer shorts with a pistol on his stomach. He had shot himself in the mouth.

As his body was wheeled out, the news camera helicopter circling above captured the end of Cunanan's reign of terror, in which no one, apparently, was safe.



WANTED BY THE FBI

UNLAWFUL FLIGHT TO AVOID PROSECUTION - MURDER SECOND DEGREE

Photo taken about 4/97

Date of Photo Unknown

ANDREW PHILLIP CUNANAN

Alias: Andrew Phillip DeSilva

DESCRIPTION

Date of Birth: August 31, 1969; Place of Birth: San Diego, California; Race: White; Sex: Male; Height: 5' 9"– 5' 10"; Weight: 160 – 180 pounds; Eyes: Brown; Hair: Dark Brown.
Remarks: Cunanan may wear prescription eyeglasses. He has been known to change his hairstyle and weight. He allegedly has ties to the gay community. He has portrayed himself as being wealthy.

CAUTION

CUNANAN IS BEING SOUGHT FOR AN APRIL, 1997 MURDER, WHICH OCCURRED IN CHISAGO COUNTY, MINNESOTA. ALSO, HE IS WANTED FOR QUESTIONING IN CONNECTION WITH ADDITIONAL MURDERS, WHICH OCCURRED IN CHISAGO COUNTY, MINNESOTA; CHICAGO, ILLINOIS; AND PENNSVILLE, NEW JERSEY. CUNANAN MAY BE IN POSSESSION OF A HANDGUN.

ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION MAY BE FOUND ON THE FBI INTERNET PAGE:
http://www.fbi.gov

FBI Ten Most Wanted Fugitive: June, 1997.

Cunanan would often change his appearance and hairstyle, donning wigs and glasses

GODFATHER VS GODFATHER

In 2010, Giuseppe Di Bella, a former member of the Calabrian Mafia (otherwise known as the N'drangheta) claimed that Versace was killed because he was in debt to the Mafia, and that Cunanan had been a scapegoat. Di Bella claimed that Versace was being used by Paolo De Stefano, the godfather, to launder money. He alleged that the fashion designer had borrowed money from the N'drangheta and was killed to settle his debt to them. Filippo Barecca, another high-ranking mobster, backed Di Bella's story and independently claimed that Cunanan was framed for the murder. Both also said that a dead turtle dove found beside Versace's body was a calling card from his enemies. Anti-Mafia investigators had heavily relied on information supplied by the two former gang members in the past, after they agreed to testify against the N'drangheta as part of a plea bargain in 2001. However, the Versace family were outraged by the claims made against their late family member 13 years after his death, and released a statement saying: "The declarations from the informer are false and shameful. We reserve the right to protect the memory and reputation of Gianni Versace in civil and criminal courts."

As Cunanan lay dead in the upstairs bedroom, 400 FBI agents and policemen surrounded the Miami boathouse, and sharpshooters positioned themselves in nearby apartment windows. The standoff lasted approximately three hours

© Alamy, Getty Images, REX features

DEADLY SPY GAMES

Alexander Litvinenko was killed in November 2006, but did the former spy actually solve his own murder?

ALEXANDER LITVINENKO

CAUSE OF DEATH
POLONIUM POISONING

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
1 NOVEMBER 2006 (POISONED)
23 NOVEMBER 2006 (DEATH)

LOCATION
LONDON, ENGLAND

ASSASSIN
ANDREI LUGOVOI (SUSPECT)

As he lay critically ill in an intensive care unit at University College Hospital in central London, the defiant words of Alexander Litvinenko were as caustic against those he felt were behind his poisoning as the chemicals ravaging his body: "You may succeed in silencing me but that silence comes at a price. You have shown yourself to be as barbaric and ruthless as your most hostile critics have claimed. You have shown yourself to have no respect of life, liberty or any civilised value. You have shown yourself unworthy of your office, to be unworthy of the trust of civilised men and women. You may succeed in silencing one man but the howl of protest from around the world will reverberate, Mr Putin, in your ears for the rest of your life. May God forgive you for what you have done, not only to me, but to beloved Russia and its people."

Litvinenko died on 23 November 2006, 22 days after being taken ill following a meeting with a business associate at the Millennium Hotel overlooking Grosvenor Square in London's Mayfair. What the perpetrators of the crime perhaps didn't bank on though was that Litvinenko would use his extensive espionage skills to finger his own killers.

Did Russian president Vladimir Putin authorise the assassination of Alexander Litvinenko?

© Wikimedia Commons, Kremlin Presidential Press and Information Office

EXPOSING THE TRUTH

Litvinenko had been a lieutenant colonel with the Federal Security Service (FSB), which was the successor to the Russian KGB and run by Vladimir Putin. However, in 1998 he was arrested with charges of abusing his office after exposing corruption within the organisation and uncovering an alleged plot to assassinate the Russian tycoon Boris Berezovsky (who was later found dead at his Ascot home in March 2013). After nine months in a remand centre, Litvinenko was acquitted and then fled to the UK in 2000 with his wife, Marina, and young son, Anatoly, where he was granted asylum.

While living in in exile, Litvinenko then went on to write the book Blowing Up Russia: Terror From Within, in which he claimed that FSB agents had been responsible for the bombing of some apartment blocks in Moscow in 1999, causing fear and panic among the Russian people. The Russian government blamed Chechen separatists for the bombings, but in his book, Litvinenko claimed that the bombings were organised by the government as a pretext for the second Russian invasion of Chechnya, and to aid Putin's rise to power.

From 2003 onwards, Litvinenko worked as a spy (an expert on Russian organised crime) for MI6, investigating Spanish links to the Russian mafia. The mafia, Litvinenko discovered, had close ties with senior Russian politicians, and the roads of corruption apparently led straight to the president's office and dated back to the Nineties when Putin was operating within the gangster circles while acting as the aide to Anatoly Sobchak, the then mayor of St Petersburg. Over the years, Litvinenko continued to openly accuse Putin and his intelligence agency of further acts of terrorism; perhaps most notably of the assassination of the prominent Russian investigative reporter, and fellow opponent of Putin's regime, Anna Politkovskaya in October 2006. Although the Russian government publicly brushed aside Litvinenko's accusations, behind the scenes a plan was being hatched to silence him once and for all - and the telling blow was delivered by someone that he knew.

FRIEND AND EXECUTIONER

On the afternoon of Wednesday 1 November 2006, Litvinenko had a rather busy schedule. At 3.00pm he met with Italian investigator Mario Scaramella at the Itsu restaurant in Piccadilly. During this meeting, at which Litvinenko ate sushi, Scaramella apparently warned him that both of them were on a Kremlin hit list. A short time later, Litvinenko was to meet with Russian businessman Andrei Lugovoi at the Millennium Hotel in Mayfair. Litvinenko and

Businessman and ex-KGB agent Andrei Lugovoi has denied any involvement with the murder

© Corbis, Sergei Chirikov

"The damage was done. the polonium was eating Litvinenko away from the inside"

Lugovoi were both members of Boris Berezovsky's entourage in the Nineties and in 2005 Lugovoi had got back in contact with Litvinenko to suggest that they work together on advising western firms who were looking to invest in Russia.

At the meeting, which took place in the hotel bar shortly after 4.00pm, Litvinenko declined to order a drink, but was offered the remainder of a pot of green tea that was already sitting on the table when he arrived. There was only about half a cup left in the pot and it was virtually cold, but Litvinenko swallowed three to four mouthfuls before the two men were joined at their table by Dmitry Kovtun – a fellow business associate of Lugovoi who, along with the two men, was an ex-KGB agent. The three men briefly discussed the arrangement of a further meeting scheduled for the following day, before they went their separate ways. What Litvinenko didn't know at the time was that the tea was laced with a toxic, radioactive chemical called polonium-210, and that the countdown on his life had started to tick.

Later that evening, as Litvinenko and his wife, Marina, were preparing to celebrate their anniversary (and recently becoming British citizens), 'Sasha' – as Marina referred to him – suddenly became very ill. "It started just like a simple sickness," she recalled, but in the days following, Litvinenko continued to suffer with vomiting and severe diarrhea, at one point being unable to even walk without assistance. Litvinenko was hospitalised for what doctors first thought was an intestinal problem, however, by the second week it was clear that something was seriously wrong. "Sasha started to feel very bad," Marina explained. "His skin became very yellow. It was so scary."

When Litvinenko struggled to open his mouth and his hair began to fall out in clumps, the doctors treating him began to realise that he had been poisoned, but had no idea what had actually poisoned him. All Scotland Yard could do was seal off his room to try and protect him – but the damage was already done, and the polonium-210 was eating Litvinenko away from the inside.

As Litvinenko lay slowly dying in hospital, he was able to give Scotland Yard detectives a detailed account of his movements, his associates and their behaviour on the day of his poisoning. And thanks to his accounts and the extensive CCTV footage from the Millennium Hotel, detectives were able to unravel a sprawling and highly dangerous polonium trail in and out of London, with faint traces found in restaurants, public transport and even Arsenal's Emirates Stadium, where Lugovoi had watched a Champions League match between the Gunners and CSKA Moscow immediately after the hotel meeting. Then, of course, there were high traces in the hotel itself – the bar, the toilets and especially Lugovoi's room, where the readings went off the scale as it appeared that the assassin had emptied the reminder of the vial down the bathroom sink. The evidence seemed highly conclusive against Lugovoi, although traces of polonium were also found at the sushi restaurant where Litvinenko had dined with Scaramella – could this have been from an earlier meeting with Lugovoi at a Grosvenor Street boardroom back in October? On that occasion, Litvinenko had declined a drink and his glass remained untouched, but perhaps he had ingested small amounts of the chemical some other way. After a two-month investigation, Scotland Yard detectives handed over a file to the then director of public prosecutions, Sir Ken Macdonald, who announced in May 2007 that he was recommending Lugovoi be charged with murder. Lugovoi, along with Kovtun, denied any responsibility for Litvinenko's death, deflecting blame to the British Secret Service on account of Litvinenko's spy status. An order to extradite Lugovoi from Russia to face murder charges in England was denied by Moscow on account of the Russian constitution preventing the extradition of its citizens, and to date no formal charges have been brought against him.

Although Litvinenko was unable to pinpoint exactly who had poisoned him, there was little doubt in his mind who was ultimately responsible, and from his hospital bed he smeared his blood on Putin's hands and allowed himself to be photographed on his deathbed in order to show the world that when you cross the Russian leader, there is ultimately only one outcome.

Litvinenko agreed to have photos taken on his deathbed to show the world how he been "poisoned by the Kremlin"

© REX, Shutterstock

WHO KILLED PAKISTAN'S DAUGHTER OF DESTINY?

The truth behind the horrific suicide bombing that killed Pakistan's first female prime minister will perhaps never be revealed

Written by Michael Simpson

In the turbulent world of Pakistani politics, the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in 2007 was arguably no surprise. The two-time former prime minister was a controversial figure. Considered relatively moderate and progressive, Bhutto had been a supporter of the US-led 'War on Terror' in neighbouring Afghanistan. She was also seen as a champion of women's rights in a country that even today has one of the lowest UN rankings for gender equality. Against that backdrop, it was inevitable that Bhutto would make enemies. What is still not clear is which of them killed her.

Born in 1953, Benazir Bhutto was exposed to Pakistan's power struggles from a young age. Her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, had served as Pakistan's president (1971-1973) and prime minister (1973-1977) before being ousted in a military coup. The new leaders imprisoned him, and he was hanged in 1979.

After becoming co-chairperson of the Pakistan Peoples Party, which her father had started, Bhutto was also imprisoned by the generals before they deported her in 1984. She returned home in 1986, however, and when elections were finally held four years later, she became the first democratically elected woman to lead a Muslim country.

Bhutto's terms as prime minister (1988-1990 and 1993-1996) both ended amid allegations of corruption, which aren't unusual in Pakistani politics. After being forced out for a second time, she went into exile again. Although a Swiss court found her and her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, guilty of money laundering, Bhutto was able to return to Pakistan in 2007 with another election looming. Death threats had been made against her, but they were not going to stop her from running again.

On 18 October, shortly after her return, Bhutto was targeted by a bomber in Karachi. The explosion killed around 180 people and maimed hundreds more, but Bhutto survived. Two months later, on 27 December, she would not be so lucky. While she was being driven away from another rally in Rawalpindi a suicide bomber fired shots and exploded a bomb near her vehicle. Bhutto was severely injured and rushed to a hospital, but the doctors couldn't save her. More than 20 people in the vicinity of the bomb were killed.

As news of Bhutto's death spread, riots broke out across Pakistan and conspiracy theories spread quickly. Some accused hard-line fundamentalists, while others suspected the intelligence services or President Pervez Musharraf. The authorities blamed the Pakistani Taliban, but since no autopsy was done, and Bhutto was buried the day after her murder, accusations of a cover-up were inevitable.

Bhutto was unpopular with al-Qaeda and its sympathisers because of her ties to the US. The organisation responsible for the 9/11 attacks claimed it had killed her. Still, many observers believed her assassins came from closer to home. In 2017 the Pakistani Taliban published a book in which its leader said their organisation murdered her. By then, however, Musharraf was under investigation and in the same year he was declared a fugitive by a Pakistan court after failing to appear at a trial in which he was accused of conspiring to kill Bhutto.

The Rawalpindi bomber was said to be a 15-year-old boy. Who he was working for isn't the only mystery that remains unsolved, though. No-one knows for sure whether Bhutto's death was caused by bullets, bomb fragments or a blow to the head caused indirectly by the explosion.

Despite the assassination of Bhutto, the 2008 election eventually went ahead, and the PPP was able to form a government. In the same year, Zardari became Pakistan's president. Yet, despite holding the reins of power, Bhutto's closest allies couldn't answer the many questions that surrounded her death. In the years since, the only people who have been convicted in connection with the crime are two high-ranking police officials, who were jailed for negligence and mishandling evidence.

Candlelight vigils were held in Pakistan and across the world after Bhutto's murder

© Getty Images, Arif Ali

BENAZIR BHUTTO

CAUSE OF DEATH
SUICIDE BOMBING

DATE OF ASSASSINATION
27 DECEMBER 2007

LOCATION
RAWALPINDI, PAKISTAN

ASSASSIN
UNKNOWN

Benazir Bhutto became the first democratically elected female leader of a Muslim-majority nation

© Getty Images, Jeff Overs

Over 20 people were killed in the Rawalpindi bombing

© Getty Images, John Moore

DEATHS IN THE FAMILY

Sadly, the Bhuttos were no strangers to brutal or unexplained deaths

Benazir Bhutto and her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, are not the only members of the Bhutto family to meet a suspicious or violent end. On 18 July 1985, her younger brother, Shahnawaz, was found dead in his apartment in Cannes, France. He was only 26. His family alleged that he was poisoned by his wife but that was never proven. Pakistan's military ruler, Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, who had executed Zulfikar, was also suspected of having a role in Shahnawaz's death because the latter, along with his brother Murtaza, had been plotting against him.

Murtaza himself was killed in 1996 two days after his 42nd birthday when he was gunned down by police near his home. Three years earlier he had been charged with terrorism connected to the militant organization he had founded with Shahnawaz to avenge his father's death. Ironically, Benazir Bhutto's husband, Asif Ali Zardari, was also a suspect in Murtaza's murder, since the two had fallen out over politics. He was indicted and jailed but later released before becoming Pakistan's president.

ELIMINATING BIN LADEN

The founder of Al-Qaeda had been in hiding for nearly a decade, but Operation Neptune Spear brought his reign of terror to an end

Written by Chris Fenton

Obama and Biden monitored the operation from the Situation Room

In the early hours of on 2 May 2011, two US army stealth helicopters flew quietly through the dark skies of northern Pakistan. They were flying low, using 'nap-of-the-earth' techniques to stay below Pakistani radar. The occupants of the helicopters were tense; they were in an allied country but if they were caught here they would have to fight their way out. Inside the cramped compartments sat 23 of the most well-trained soldiers on earth: US Navy SEAL Team Six.

As they approached the small Pakistani town of Abbottabad, a lurch from one of the helicopters and an engine whine surprised the SEALs - the helicopter was caught in its own rotor wash kicked up from the walls of the compound. The pilot warned them that they would have to abandon fast roping down as the helicopter crashed in an animal pen, and the SEALs checked each other for injuries. There were none. The mission was still a go.

An alleyway and a courtyard lay between the SEALs and the front door of the apartment. Locked doors would have to be blown off with C-4. Short, sharp explosions rippled through the quiet night until, finally, the SEALs were at the front door. A man wielding an AK-47 appeared, but was quickly shot by one of the team before they proceeded into the house to clear the floors.

The team in the second helicopter landed away from the apartment to prevent interference but the loud crash of the helicopter and explosions had aroused interest. A Pakistani interpreter told the crowd to go away; the longer they stayed, the more likely Pakistani police or military would show up.

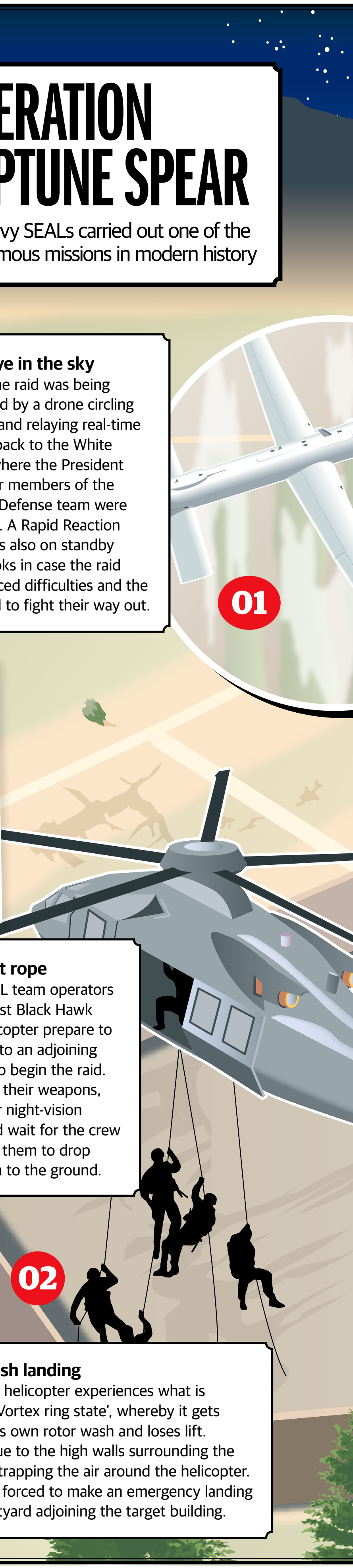
Muffled shots rang out in the house and the terrified women and children were cuffed and secured in the darkness. One of the SEALs caught sight of a thin-bearded man peeking around a door on the third floor. The SEALs stacked up on the door and entered the room.

Two women were shielding the man. One screamed and rushed the first SEAL through the door - he shot her in the thigh. He then bundled the two women into a bear hug, fearing suicide jackets. The second SEAL turned to the thin-bearded man and shot him, killing him instantly.

The SEAL team member radioed back to Washington DC: "For God and country - Geronimo, Geronimo, Geronimo." In the White House, President Barack Obama solemnly declared: "We got him." Osama Bin Laden was dead.

OPERATION NEPTUNE SPEAR

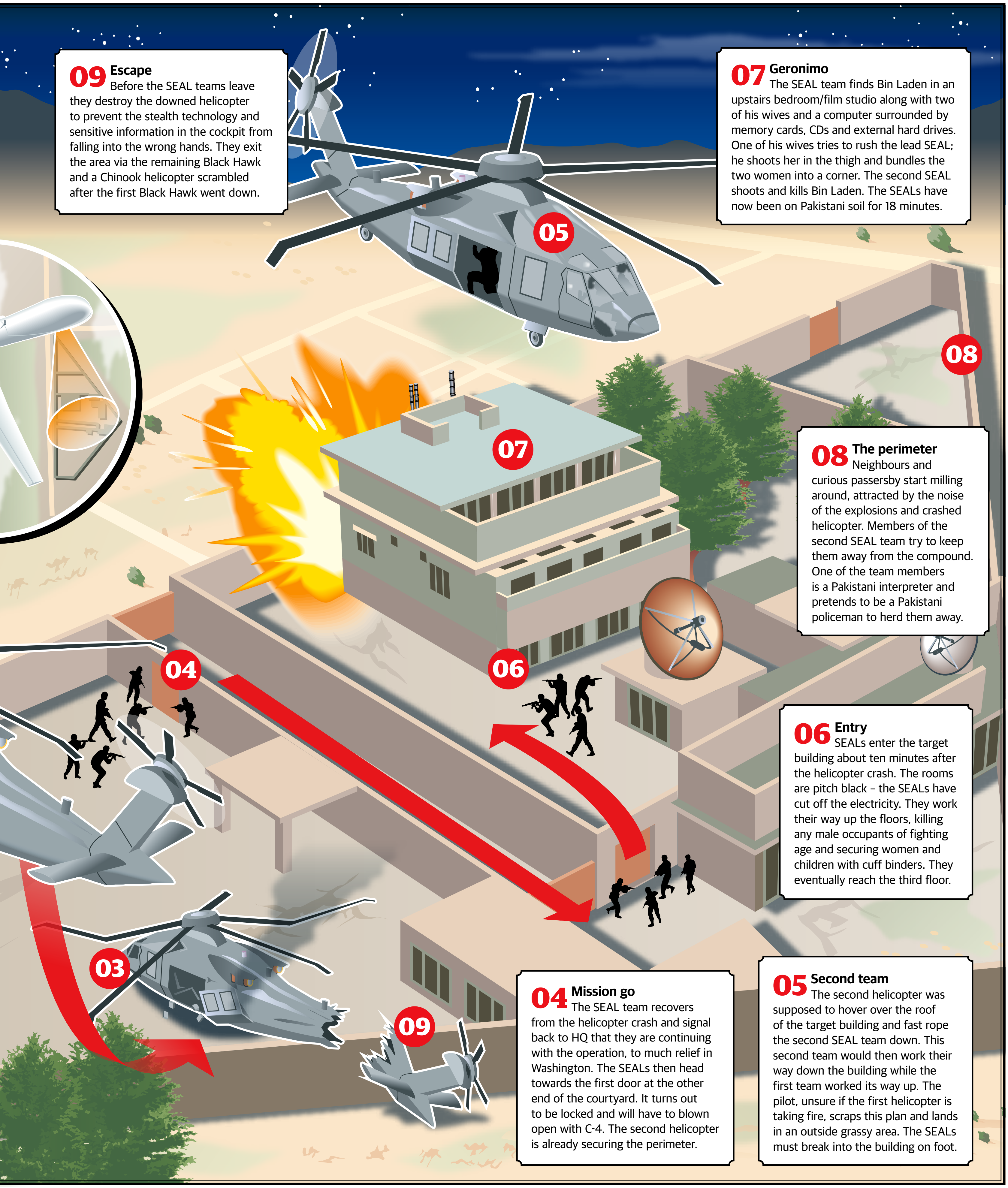
How Navy SEALs carried out one of the most famous missions in modern history



01 Eye in the sky
The raid was being monitored by a drone circling the area and relaying real-time footage back to the White House, where the President and other members of the National Defense team were watching. A Rapid Reaction Force was also on standby in Chinooks in case the raid experienced difficulties and the team had to fight their way out.

02 Fast rope
SEAL team operators from the first Black Hawk stealth helicopter prepare to fast rope into an adjoining courtyard to begin the raid. They check their weapons, secure their night-vision goggles and wait for the crew chief to tell them to drop ropes down to the ground.

03 Crash landing
The helicopter experiences what is known as 'Vortex ring state', whereby it gets caught in its own rotor wash and loses lift. This was due to the high walls surrounding the courtyard, trapping the air around the helicopter. The pilot is forced to make an emergency landing in the courtyard adjoining the target building.



04 Mission go
The SEAL team recovers from the helicopter crash and signal back to HQ that they are continuing with the operation, to much relief in Washington. The SEALs then head towards the first door at the other end of the courtyard. It turns out to be locked and will have to blown open with C-4. The second helicopter is already securing the perimeter.

05 Second team
The second helicopter was supposed to hover over the roof of the target building and fast rope the second SEAL team down. This second team would then work their way down the building while the first team worked its way up. The pilot, unsure if the first helicopter is taking fire, scraps this plan and lands in an outside grassy area. The SEALs must break into the building on foot.

06 Entry
SEALs enter the target building about ten minutes after the helicopter crash. The rooms are pitch black – the SEALs have cut off the electricity. They work their way up the floors, killing any male occupants of fighting age and securing women and children with cuff binders. They eventually reach the third floor.

07 Geronimo
The SEAL team finds Bin Laden in an upstairs bedroom/film studio along with two of his wives and a computer surrounded by memory cards, CDs and external hard drives. One of his wives tries to rush the lead SEAL; he shoots her in the thigh and bundles the two women into a corner. The second SEAL shoots and kills Bin Laden. The SEALs have now been on Pakistani soil for 18 minutes.

08 The perimeter
Neighbours and curious passersby start milling around, attracted by the noise of the explosions and crashed helicopter. Members of the second SEAL team try to keep them away from the compound. One of the team members is a Pakistani interpreter and pretends to be a Pakistani policeman to herd them away.

09 Escape
Before the SEAL teams leave they destroy the downed helicopter to prevent the stealth technology and sensitive information in the cockpit from falling into the wrong hands. They exit the area via the remaining Black Hawk and a Chinook helicopter scrambled after the first Black Hawk went down.

© Pete Souza; Ian Moores Graphics

THE GIRL WHO DEFIED HER ENEMIES

Shot for going to school: Malala Yousafzai's miraculous survival story brought the fight for girls' education to the world's attention

Written by Jonathan O'Callaghan

Many assassinations are for nefarious or downright evil reasons. But perhaps none is as poignant or terrible as the attempted assassination of a child in 2012. An outspoken proponent for education for girls around the world, the attempt on her life would do nothing to halt her impact on the world; instead, her would-be assassins found they had unleashed a new power for equal rights on the world, a power that has piece by piece torn down their archaic mantra.

Malala Yousafzai was born on 12 July 1997 in Mingora, Swat Valley, Pakistan. Her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, was a social activist who had established a local school (called the Khushal Girls High School and College) to allow girls to have the same education afforded to boys. Educated at first by her father, Malala later attended school herself, while her father remained an advocate of education for all, including his young daughter, in an increasingly fraught world.

In 2007 however, the Taliban invaded the region and ruled that girls were not entitled to an education under Islamic law. They began shutting down schools and stopped women from participating in society. Swat Valley, once a popular vacation destination in Pakistan, became a hotbed of Taliban activity that was susceptible to suicide bombings, like other parts of the country. Locals had to contend with frequent military incursions by the Taliban, who began to remove anything they believed to be an affront to Islam.

One way in which the Taliban tried to do this was to prevent girls going to school, believing that women did not have a right to an education. In 2008 they announced an edict that said that all female education must stop. By the end of the year they had destroyed about 400 schools across Pakistan. Some managed to stay open though, including the school attended by Malala. In 2009, Malala's father was contacted by a BBC journalist asking if he knew of anyone who could describe

FAILED ATTEMPT
MALALA YOUSAFZAI

CAUSE OF INJURY
GUNSHOT WOUND

DATE OF ATTEMPT
9 OCTOBER 2012

LOCATION
SWAT VALLEY, PAKISTAN

WOULD-BE ASSASSINS
THE TALIBAN

Malala survived the attempt on her life, and remains a vocal advocate for girls' education

© Getty / Fairfax Media

Malala pictured in 2012 while in recovery at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, UK, with her family by her side

© Getty

EXTRACT FROM MALALA'S SPEECH TO THE UN IN JULY 2013

"Dear brothers and sisters, we want schools and education for every child's bright future. We will continue our journey to our destination of peace and education for everyone. No one can stop us. We will speak for our rights and we will bring change through our voice. We must believe in the power and the strength of our words. Our words can change the world. Because we are all together, united for the cause of education. And if we want to achieve our goal, then let us empower ourselves with the weapon of knowledge and let us shield ourselves with unity and togetherness.

"Dear brothers and sisters, we must not forget that millions of people are suffering from poverty, injustice and ignorance. We must not forget that millions of children are out of schools. We must not forget that our sisters and brothers are waiting for a bright peaceful future. So let us wage a global struggle against illiteracy, poverty and terrorism and let us pick up our books and pens. They are our most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world. Education is the only solution. Education first. Thank you."

© Getty / Stan Honda

life going to school under the Taliban, and he suggested to his daughter that she take up the offer.

Malala became an outspoken advocate of women's rights for education under an anonymous blog for BBC Urdu called *Diary of a Pakistani Schoolgirl*. She wrote under a pseudonym, Gul Makai, to avoid causing any trouble for her and her family. In the blog, she detailed some of the events that were happening to her and her classmates, and their struggle to continue their education. The blog painted a bleak picture of what life was like trying to get an education as a woman under the Taliban.

Despite her young years, Malala had already been taking a stand against oppressive Taliban rule. In September 2008 she gave a speech at a local press club in Peshawar, titled "How dare the Taliban take away my basic right to education?" The Taliban, however, had begun to take note, and as Malala's stature grew, she ran the risk of becoming a target.

In January 2009, at the age of 11 she wrote in her BBC blog about how the Taliban planned to shut the girls' school she attended. Numbers at the school dropped from 27 to 11, and the principal advised those who would still attend that they should walk to school in their own clothes, rather than in uniform, to avoid unwanted attention. Malala spoke about how a man said he would kill her on her way back from school one day, but the incident did not escalate further.

"No-one thought the Taliban would target a child" – Mishal Husain

"My friend came to me and said, 'for God's sake, answer me honestly, is our school going to be attacked by the Taliban?'", she wrote in one entry into her BBC diary. "During the morning assembly we were told not to wear colourful clothes as the Taliban would object to it."

Malala appeared on TV for the first time in February 2009, before working on a documentary with a reporter from *The New York Times* about the schools that were being closed by the Taliban. In May 2009, Malala and her family were forced to leave the Swat Valley due to escalating tensions with the Taliban. But when they returned weeks later, Malala continued her fight for girls' education in Pakistan.

Later that year she met with Richard Holbrooke, the US special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, and continued to make media appearances. By December 2009 she had been revealed to be the author of the BBC blog on life as a schoolgirl in Pakistan, and received numerous accolades for her work. She was awarded the International Children's Peace Prize and Pakistan's National Youth Peace Prize in 2011, the former after being nominated by Desmond Tutu. Malala was a star around the world, but she had been steadily drawing more and more of the Taliban's attention, who remained locked in a war with Pakistan.

Then, in 2012, the Taliban came to the abhorrent decision that they would attempt to kill Malala, just a child at the time, to stop her spreading what they saw as blasphemous words about Islam. While Malala and her parents were aware of the death threat, they were not prepared for the attempt on her life. "No-one thought the Taliban would target a child," BBC journalist Mishal Husain wrote in 2013.

On 9 October 2012, Malala left her school like any other day and boarded a bus that would take her home, essentially a covered pickup truck. The journey was short but her mother had requested she take the bus, as she was becoming more and more renowned for her outspoken views.

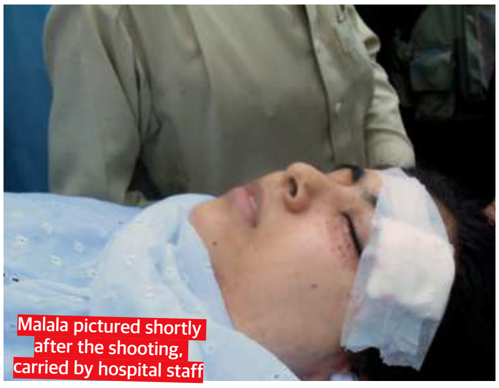
Malala's story

- Malala Yousafzai is born in Swat Valley, Pakistan, to parents Ziauddin and Toorpekai Yousafzai **12 July 1997**
- Malala gives her first speech, to a local press club in Peshawar protesting the Taliban closure of schools. **1 September 2009**
- Under the pseudonym of Gul Makai, Malala begins writing a blog for the BBC revealing what life is like living under the Taliban. **January 2009**
- After being revealed as the BBC blog author, Malala is awarded the first National Youth Peace Prize of Pakistan. **24 November 2011**

SAVE OUR
RIGHT
TO EDUCATION
SHAME ON YO
TALIBAN

The attempted assassination drew a wave of condemnation of the Taliban

© Getty / Aamir Qureshi


Malala pictured shortly after the shooting, carried by hospital staff

© Getty / AFP

Meeting with the Obamas at the White House in October 2013

© Official White House Photo by Pete Souza

Something immediately struck her as odd though, namely that there was nobody else around on the usually busy street.

Just 100 yards from the school gates, two young men stopped the bus and then stepped on. They walked to the back of the bus and demanded "Who is Malala?". The other girls innocently looked towards Malala, inadvertently revealing her identity. When it became apparent who she was, one of the men shot her in the head. The bullet passed through the left side of her head and stopped at her shoulder, while two other bullets also injured two of her friends.

Amazingly, Malala did not die from this barbaric attack. She was airlifted to a Pakistani military hospital in Peshawar, before being taken to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, UK, with numerous countries offering their support. Against the odds, after being urgently treated, Malala emerged from a coma days later on 17 October 2012, very much alive. After fighting off an infection she gradually returned to health, and by January 2013 she had been discharged to a temporary home with her parents in Birmingham. The Taliban's efforts to kill one of their most outspoken critics had failed, and in its wake was a sense of renewed purpose that would see sweeping changes come to pass.

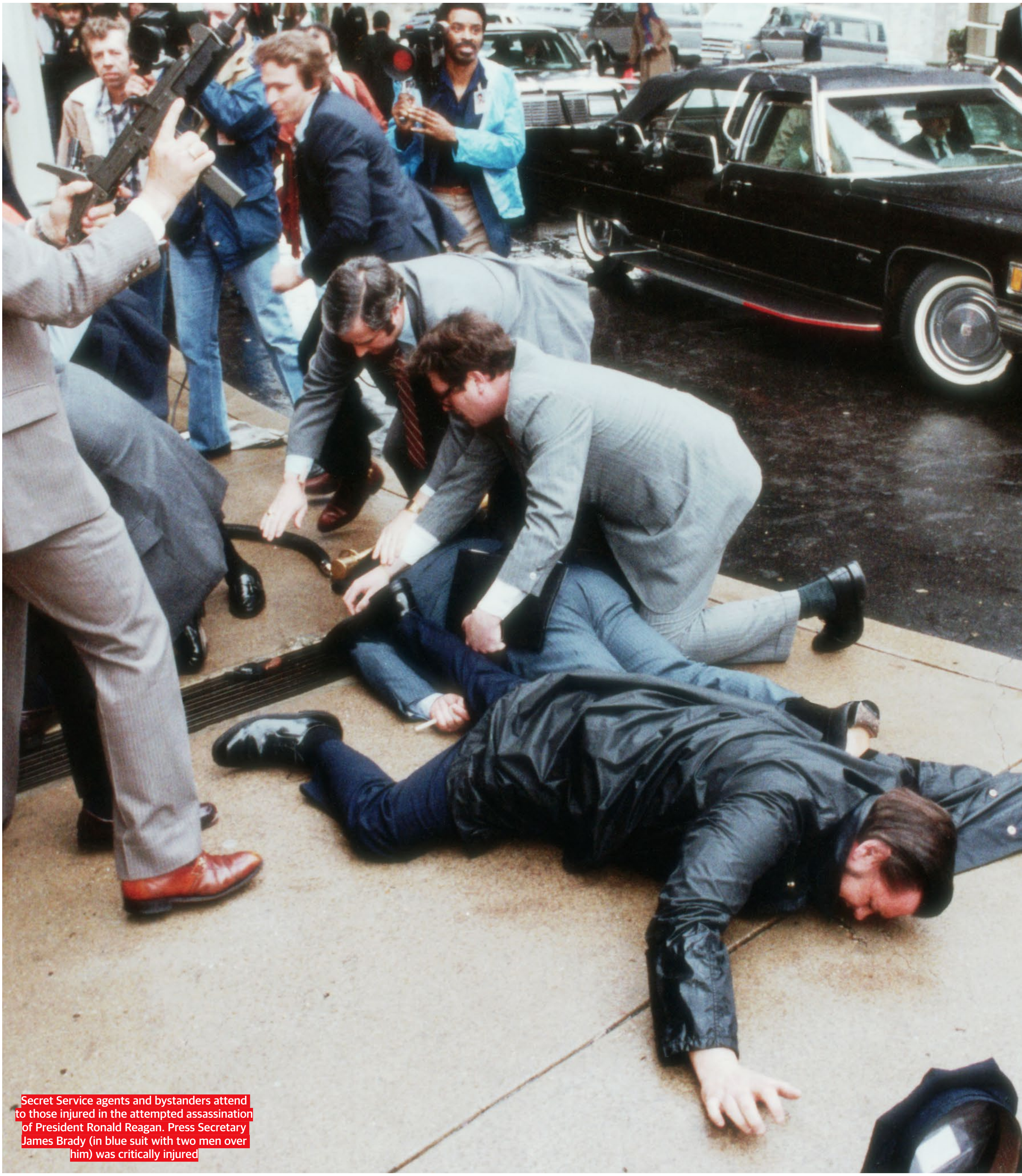
The attack was widely condemned by figures across the world including Barack Obama, Hilary Clinton, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Pakistani's president Asif Ali Zardari, and many more. Numerous celebrities also spoke of their support for Malala, including Madonna, who dedicated her song *Human Nature* to her, and Angelina Jolie, who wrote an article in support of her. In the UK, Gordon Brown introduced a petition to the UN to have all children of the world in school by 2015 and, which led to the introduction of the Right to Education bill in Pakistan.

Malala made her first public appearance after being shot in July 2013 on her 16th birthday, addressing the United Nations in New York. She was awarded the UN Human Rights Prize that year, while also being named one of *Time* magazine's most influential people. She also co-authored a memoir in 2013, titled *I Am Malala*, and in 2014 became the youngest ever Nobel laureate when she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Taliban's attempt on Malala's life did nothing to stop the growing support for equal rights in Pakistan and beyond, instead causing quite the opposite effect. The Taliban became widely denounced by Islamic clerics in Pakistan as a result of their actions, and in 2013 they attempted to justify their actions with a letter from a senior figure that said they believed she was running a "smearing campaign" against them.

Malala today is a beacon of hope for girls attending school across the world, and she remains a highly influential figure in the advocation of the right to education for all. At the time of writing, she is attending Oxford University, where she is studying politics, philosophy, and economics. Today more than ever, she is a figure of hope and acceptance in the face of unwarranted opposition. "Five years ago, I was shot in an attempt to stop me from speaking out for girls' education," she wrote on Twitter on 9 October 2017. "Today, I attend my first lectures at Oxford."

- On the way home from school, two Taliban men board Malala's school bus and shoot her in the head. **9 October 2012**
- Malala is taken to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham for emergency treatment. **15 October 2012**
- Malala emerges from a coma having miraculously survived the attempt on her life. **17 October 2012**
- Malala is released from hospital and joins her family at a new home in Birmingham. **8 February 2013**
- Just months after her release from hospital, Malala gives an address to the UN in New York. **12 July 2013**
- Alongside activist Kailash Satyarthi, Malala is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, becoming the youngest ever Nobel laureate. **10 October 2014**
- Malala begins studying at Oxford University, five years after the failed assassination attempt. **9 October 2017**



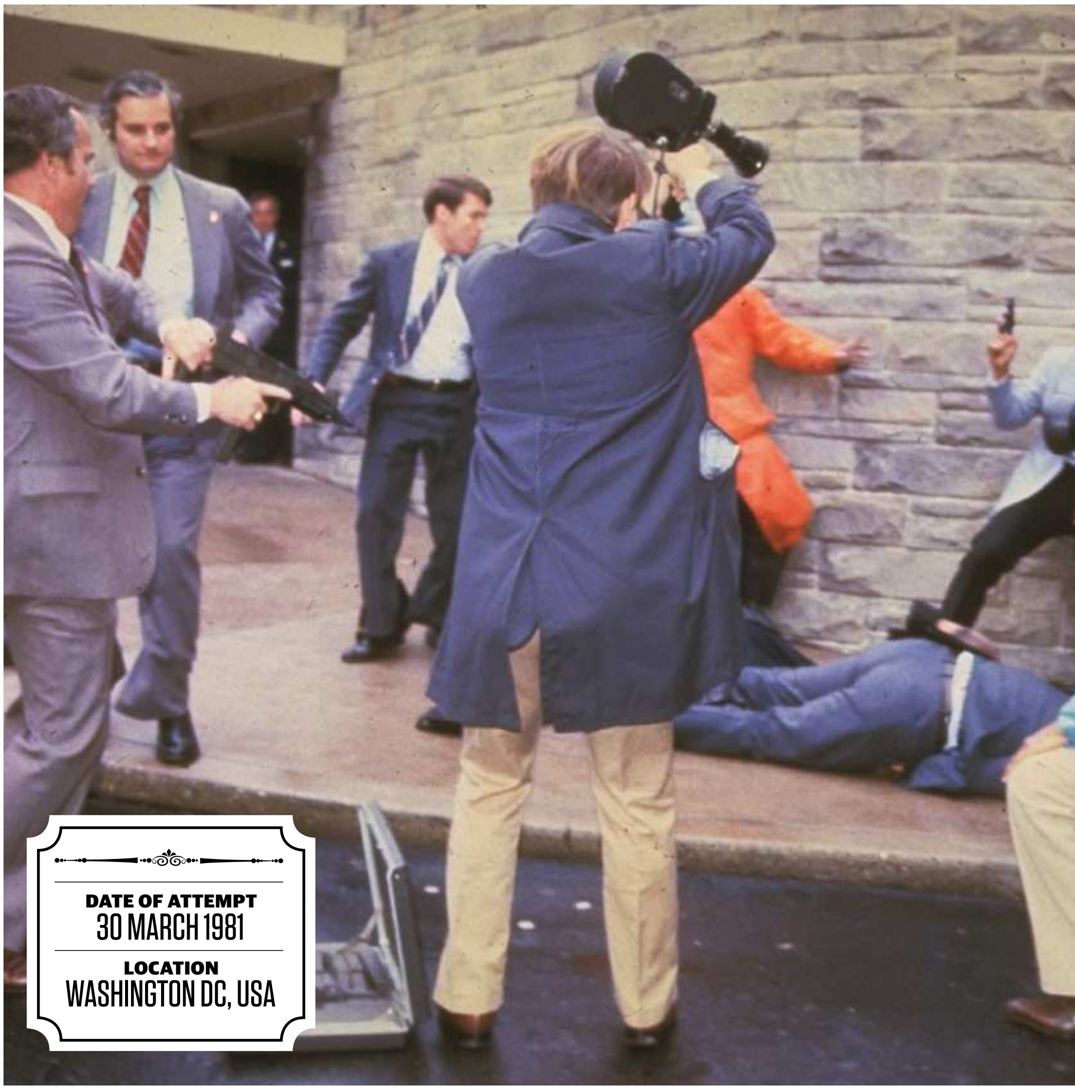
Secret Service agents and bystanders attend to those injured in the attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan. Press Secretary James Brady (in blue suit with two men over him) was critically injured

© Getty Images, Corbis Historical

10 FAILED ASSASSINATIONS THAT WOULD HAVE CHANGED HISTORY

The monarchs and political leaders that dodged bullets, bomb blasts and takeover plots

Written by Jodie Tyley

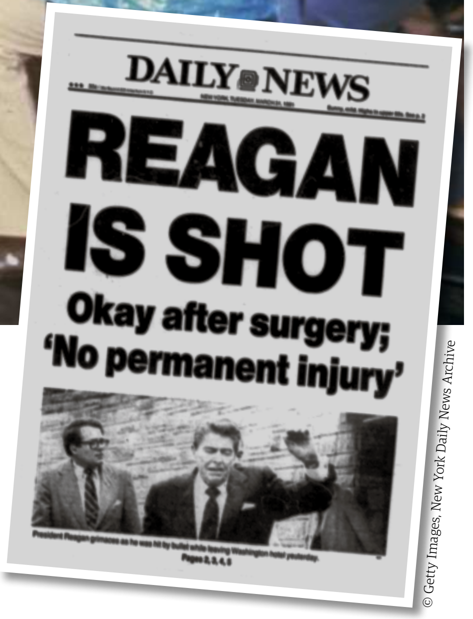


The attempt on Reagan's life was captured by several television networks filming at the time

© Getty Images, Dirck Halstead

DATE OF ATTEMPT
30 MARCH 1981

LOCATION
WASHINGTON DC, USA



DAILY NEWS

REAGAN IS SHOT

Okay after surgery; 'No permanent injury'

President Reagan grimaces as he was hit by bullet while leaving Washington hotel yesterday. Pages 2, 3, 4, 5

© Getty Images, New York Daily News Archive

PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN

18 years after the assassination of President John F Kennedy, the nation faced losing another leader

President Ronald Reagan had been in office for 69 days when he was shot by a deranged college dropout. John Hinkley Jr had been stalking actress Jodie Foster and bizarrely believed that killing the President of the United States would impress her.

After delivering a speech at the Washington Hilton Hotel, Reagan and his White House entourage were escorted by Secret Service agents to a limousine. The president smiled and waved to the spectators as the would-be assassin fired his gun. A bullet ricocheted off the limousine and struck Reagan in the left lung, about one inch from his heart. Acting fast, one of the agents shoved him into the vehicle and slammed the door, as another agent and a police officer were also shot. But it was White House press secretary John Brady whose wounds would never heal – he had been hit in the head and was paralysed for life.

The limousine sped to hospital with the injured president, who was starting to cough up blood. "Suddenly I realised I could barely breathe," Reagan later recalled. "No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't get enough air. I was frightened and started to panic a little." Still, the 70-year-old insisted that he shuffled into the hospital and he remained in good spirits despite being close to death. "Please tell me you're Republicans," he quipped to the surgeons. The next day, he signed legislation from his bed in the intensive care unit, and two weeks later he was back in the White House.

Reagan's popularity ratings soared and the late journalist David Broder wrote at the time: "The honeymoon has ended and a new legend has been born. As long as people remember the hospitalised president joshing his doctors and nurses – and they will remember – no critic will be able to portray Reagan as a cruel or callous or heartless man."

The shooter, Hinkley Jr, was found not guilty by insanity – a verdict that sparked public outcry and led to the Insanity Defense Reform Act of 1984. He described his actions as "the greatest love offering in the history of the world" and was dismayed that Jodie Foster didn't "appreciate" what he had done. Hinkley Jr was admitted to a psychiatric hospital where he remained until 2016, when he was released under strict conditions.

KING JAMES I AND MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Remember, remember, the fifth of November, the Gunpowder Treason and Plot

For over a year, a group of Catholic conspirators led by Robert Catesby plotted to overthrow the government and kill the King of England. They rented a cellar underneath the Lords' chamber and filled it with gunpowder, ready for the opening of parliament on the 5 November.

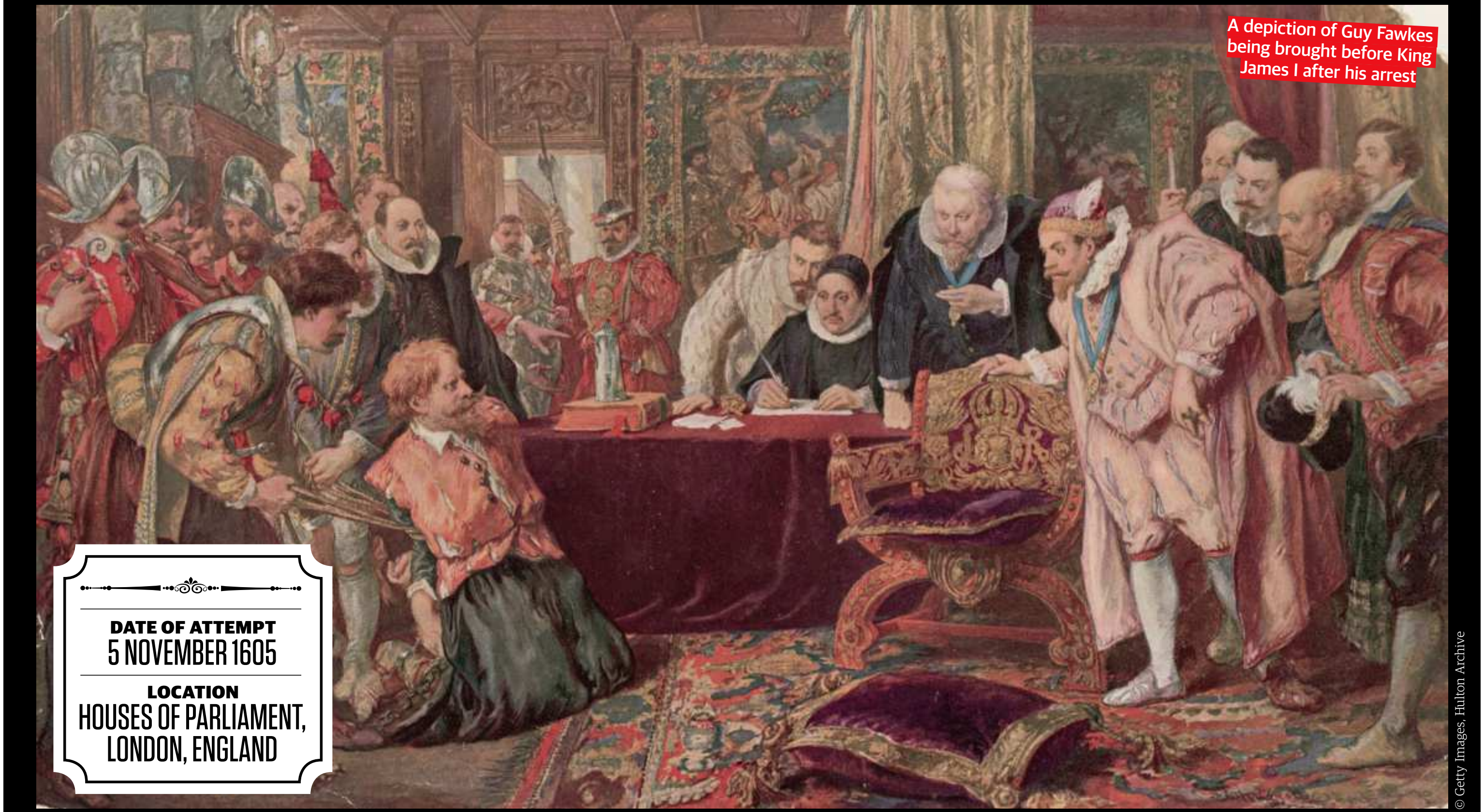
Catesby was fervently religious and, like other Catholics in the country, had hoped that the years of persecution under Queen Elizabeth I's rule would die with her. However, rumours that James I of England (VI of Scotland) would be more tolerant were dashed when he exiled all priests and Jesuits and reintroduced recusancy fines for those who refused to attend Church of England services. Catesby was not content with hiding his faith and used his natural charm to recruit like-minded individuals who would obliterate parliament for "in that place they have done us all the mischief, and perchance God hath designed that place for their punishment."

There were 13 plotters in total - many from elite English families - but Guy Fawkes was unknown to the authorities. Posing as a servant, he smuggled in more than 30 barrels of gunpowder and piles of firewood. This vital role in the conspiracy ensured Fawkes' name was never forgotten. An anonymous letter was sent to a Catholic Lord warning him to stay away from the Palace of Westminster on 5 November, as "they shall receive a terrible blow this parliament." A search was ordered and Fawkes was caught red-handed.

Half the plotters were killed in a shoot-out while the rest were tried for treason. Guy Fawkes remained tight-lipped during the interrogations, prompting the king to grant permission to use torture "proceeding to the worst". No one knows exactly what horrors he experienced in the Tower of London, but it's speculated that he was put on the rack - an instrument that stretched the victim's body until limbs were ripped from their sockets.

By the time Fawkes signed his confession eight days later, he could barely hold a quill. The surviving conspirators were sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered in January 1606 - a grisly execution that Fawkes narrowly avoided. Mustering up what strength he had left, he jumped from the scaffold and broke his neck.

That same month, the Thanksgiving Act was passed to celebrate the failure to blow up the king and Parliament. Special church services were held annually with bell-ringing, bonfires and fireworks. Even now, over 400 years later, we still remember the 5 November.



A depiction of Guy Fawkes being brought before King James I after his arrest

DATE OF ATTEMPT
5 NOVEMBER 1605

LOCATION
HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, LONDON, ENGLAND

© Getty Images, Hulton Archive

PRIME MINISTER MARGARET THATCHER AND CABINET MINISTERS

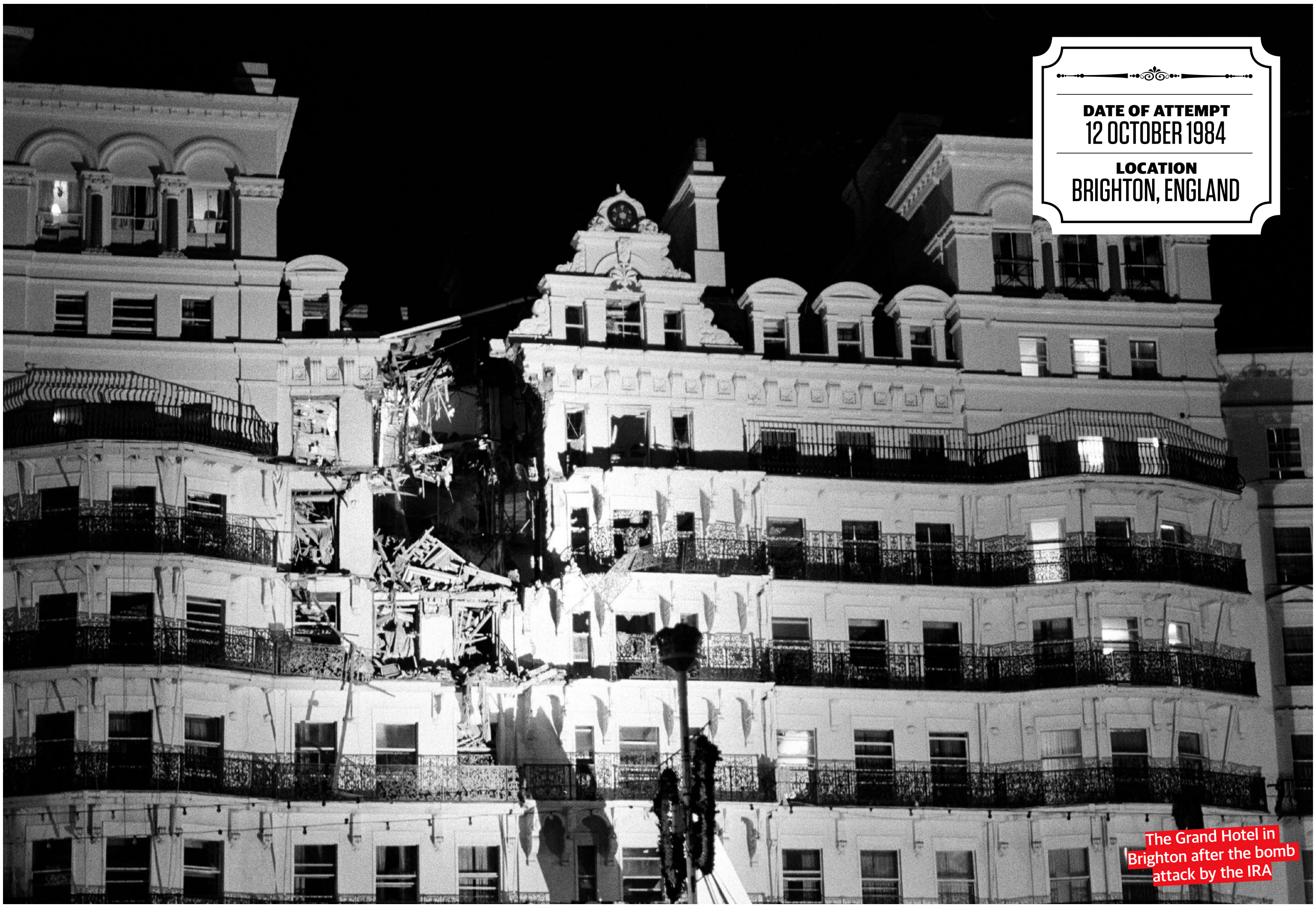
The IRA makes the prime minister their number-one target to end British rule in Northern Ireland

While most of the Grand Hotel's guests slept, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was characteristically still working, perfecting her speech for the annual Conservative conference. However, just before 3am, the peace was shattered by an almighty blast that tore through the Brighton hotel, sending masonry crashing down on the sleeping occupants. Thatcher's bathroom was badly damaged but her exits were clear and the prime minister and her husband Denis escaped the wreckage without injury. Others weren't so lucky. Five people connected with the Conservative Party were killed, including a Member of Parliament, and more than 30 were injured.

It was a calculated attack by the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA), who released a chilling statement: "Today we were unlucky but we only have to be lucky once, you will have to be lucky always, give Ireland peace and there will be no more war." Weeks before the conference, IRA member Patrick Magee had booked into the hotel under a pseudonym for the weekend of 14-17 September. During his stay, he planted a bomb with a long-delay timer under the bath. The room was several floors above Thatcher's suite.

The prime minister insisted the conference opened as planned – a decision that shocked principal secretary Lord Butler. In a BBC documentary he recalled what happened: "I said to her, 'You can't be serious, this terrible thing has happened and some of your closest colleagues have been killed and badly injured, you're not just to go on with the party conference as if nothing has happened, are you?' And she said, 'This is our opportunity to show that terrorism can't defeat democracy.' Of course she was right."

Had the prime minister died that night, it would have had a huge impact on British politics and the peace process in Northern Ireland. The following year Thatcher signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement – an important step that's thought to have paved the way for the eventual Good Friday Agreement and an end to the Troubles.



DATE OF ATTEMPT
12 OCTOBER 1984

LOCATION
BRIGHTON, ENGLAND

The Grand Hotel in Brighton after the bomb attack by the IRA

© Getty Images, John Downing

Charles de Gaulle waving from a Citroën DS

© Wikimedia Commons, Gnotype

CHARLES DE GAULLE

How a Citroën saved the French president's life

DATE OF ATTEMPT
22 AUGUST 1962
LOCATION
PARIS, FRANCE

President Charles de Gaulle and his wife made their way from the Elysée Palace to Orly airport. It was an overcast evening in Paris and General de Gaulle had been presiding over a Cabinet meeting to discuss Algeria. A month earlier he had granted independence to the French colony after seven years of brutal war for sovereignty - a decision that the OAS (Secret Army Organisation) would not accept. The paramilitary force had been attempting to prevent Algerian independence through a campaign of terror, and now they turned their weapons on the president they believed had betrayed France.

As de Gaulle's black Citroën DS 19 travelled along the Avenue de la Liberation, a dozen OAS gunmen appeared out of the drizzle and opened fire with submachine guns. Two of the president's motorcycle bodyguards were killed in the hail of bullets. The Citroën's tyres were punctured, sending the vehicle into a front-wheel skid that could have been fatal had it not been for the car's self-levelling suspension system. De Gaulle and his wife had kept their heads down and were both unscathed. De Gaulle survived over 30 assassination attempts but this made international headlines. The events were dramatised in the best-selling novel *The Day Of The Jackal* that was later adapted for film.

The would-be assassins went into hiding but eventually all but one were caught. The president pardoned those who fired the shots but he refused to pardon the man who ordered his subordinates to open fire. Jean Bastien-Thiry had argued that he only intended to kidnap de Gaulle, not kill him, but when asked what he would have done if the president resisted, he replied: "We would have removed his glasses and suspenders." The courtroom broke into laughter and his defense lawyer reportedly said: "He has just signed his own death warrant." Bastien-Thiry was executed by firing squad a week after the trial.

One of his accomplices, however, had his death sentence commuted to life imprisonment and only served five years before being released. "My only regret is not to have killed de Gaulle," Alain de la Tocnaye told *The New York Times* in 1973. "If one does things according to one's conscience, why should one feel repentant?"

ELIZABETH I

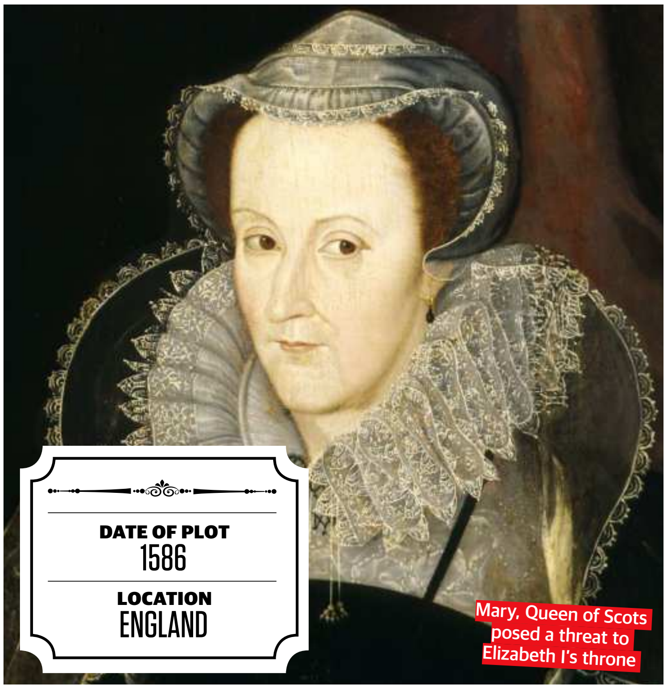
The Catholic plot that lead to Mary Queen of Scots' botched beheading

Elizabeth I and Mary, Queen of Scots were royal relatives and deadly rivals, but never actually met. They kept a close eye on each other, though. Mary had a claim to the throne and the support of Catholics in England, Spain and France who wanted to see her depose the Protestant monarch. To reduce the threat to the throne, Elizabeth imprisoned her cousin in England for 19 years.

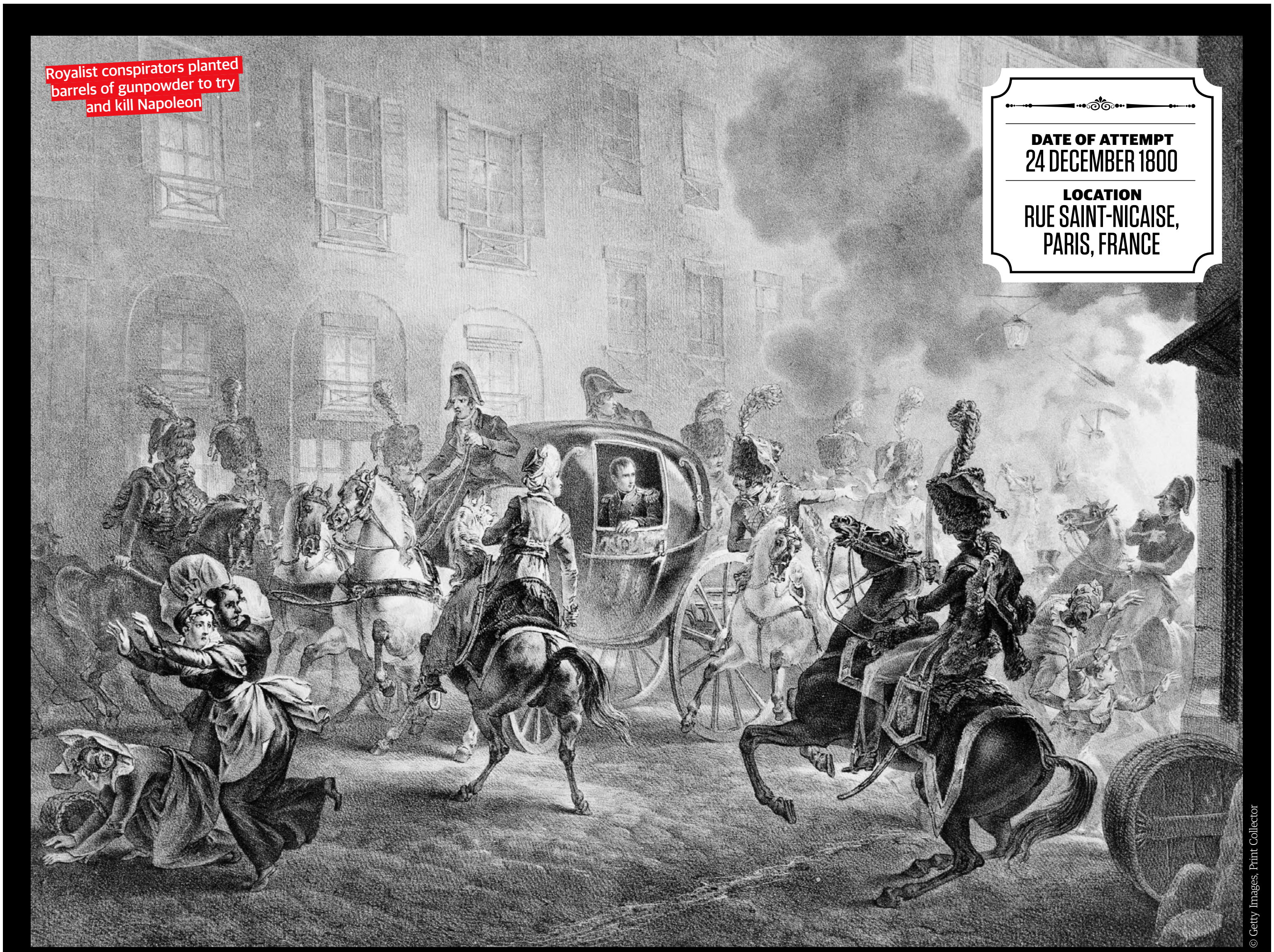
During that time there were four Catholic plots against her but Elizabeth had a secret weapon - a network of spies supervised by Francis Walsingham. As a fervent Protestant and the Queen's loyal supporter, Walsingham was bent on bringing about Mary's downfall. The Babington Plot would do just that.

The plot was named after Anthony Babington who conspired to rescue Mary and make her queen, re-establishing Catholicism in England. Walsingham caught wind that Babington and his conspirators were corresponding with Mary, so he hatched a plan of his own. He ordered one of his spies to pose as a double agent and intercept the letters that were smuggled in and out of Mary's residence in beer barrels.

The messages were written in code, but these were deciphered by Elizabeth's secret agents and Walsingham had the proof he needed. Forging a message from Mary, he asked for the names of the plotters, which were duly supplied. The men were captured, tried and publicly executed in the most horrific way as a warning to others. Mary was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death but when she placed her head on the chopping block, the executioner missed and it took three blows of the axe to sever her head. Mary died but hope for a Catholic revolution was still alive, and decades later a group of conspirators set their sights on Parliament.


Mary, Queen of Scots posed a threat to Elizabeth I's throne

DATE OF PLOT
1586
LOCATION
ENGLAND



Royalist conspirators planted barrels of gunpowder to try and kill Napoleon

DATE OF ATTEMPT
24 DECEMBER 1800

LOCATION
RUE SAINT-NICAISE, PARIS, FRANCE

© Getty Images, Print Collector

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

The first consul of France had many enemies that conspired to kill him

Today Napoleon Bonaparte is considered one of the most influential leaders and greatest military generals in history, but his life was almost cut short by a bomb blast.

Having risen through the ranks of the military during the French Revolution (1789-1799), Napoleon was now the de facto dictator of the French Republic. The king was dead and the country's enemies were defeated, but France was far from stable and Napoleon had many enemies. The Plot of the rue Saint-Nicaise wasn't the first attempt on his life, and it wouldn't be the last.

It was Christmas Eve in 1800 and Napoleon was on his way to the opera in Paris, not knowing that Royalist plotters had filled a cart with explosives along the path of his carriage. However, a lookout who was meant to signal when their target was in sight lost his nerve and fled. The man who lit the fuse only did so when he saw the carriage approaching so the explosion happened seconds too late. Napoleon's carriage windows were blown away but he was otherwise unharmed - it was the people on the streets that were killed and maimed. A teenage girl was among the victims.

"For such an atrocious crime we must have vengeance like a thunderbolt;" Napoleon commanded, "blood must flow; we must shoot as many guilty men as there have been victims." He assumed it was his enemies on the left, the Jacobins, who wanted to bring back the Reign of Terror and the Republic. After all, it was that group that attempted to kill him mere months before. Around 130 Jacobins were arrested and deported from France, even when it was revealed that the Plot of the rue Saint-Nicaise was masterminded by the Royalists, who sought to reinstate the monarchy. Vengeance enacted, Napoleon consolidated his power four years later by crowning himself the first emperor of France.

QUEEN VICTORIA

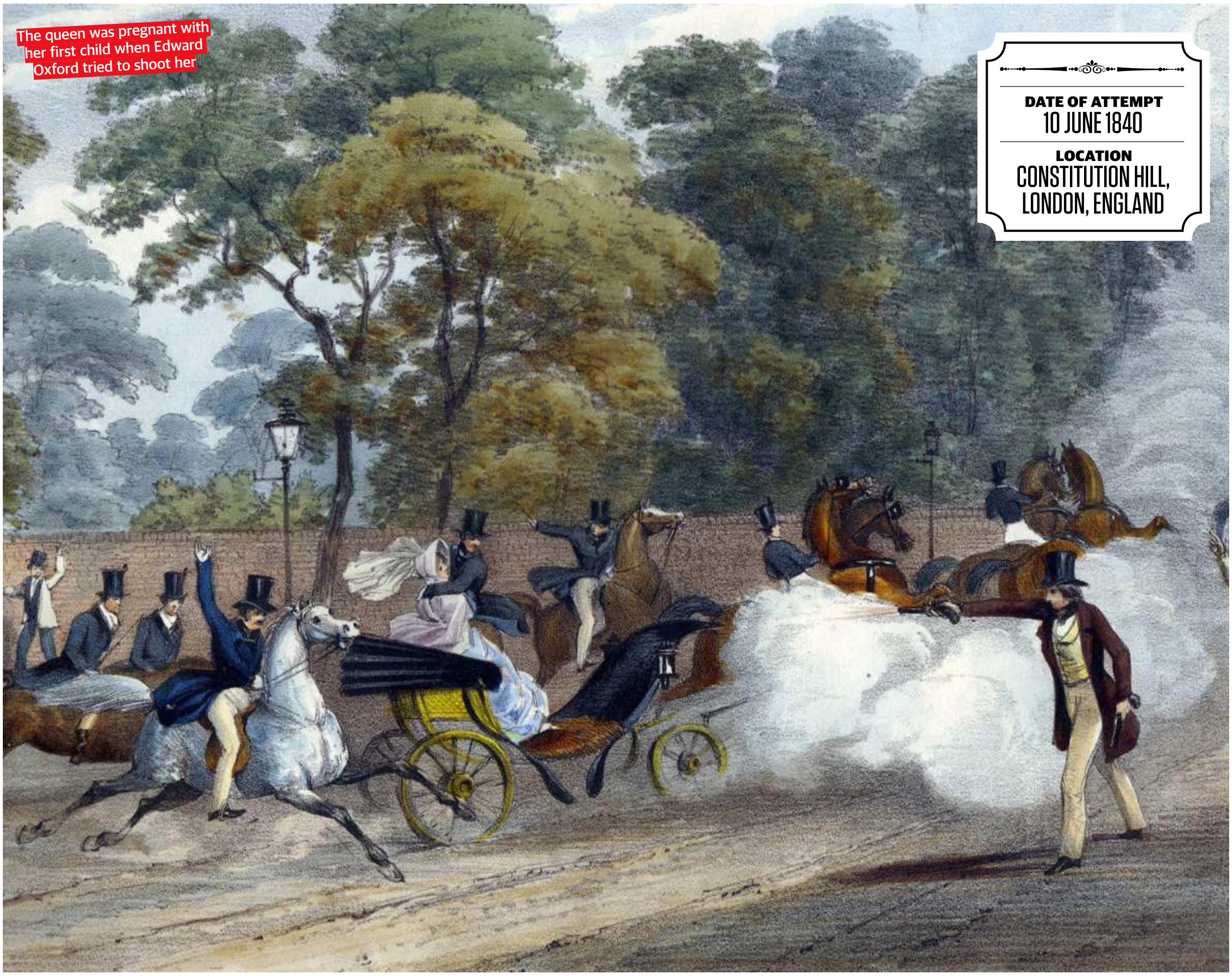
The first of many attempts on the young monarch's life

Newlyweds Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were enjoying their daily ride through Hyde Park. Sitting in an open carriage, the couple had just left Buckingham Palace when Albert noticed "a little mean-looking man holding something towards us." Next thing, a shot was fired. "Albert directly ordered the Postillion to drive on as if nothing had happened," Victoria later wrote in her diary. It had never occurred to them the shot was meant for her.

Grappled to the ground, the traitor declared: "It was I, it was me that did it." 18-year-old Edward Oxford made no attempt to conceal his actions. He was arrested and charged with treason. Had Oxford succeeded in his attempt to kill the queen, he would have also murdered her unborn heir; she was four months pregnant with her first child. A week previously, he had observed the royals' evening carriage ride and noticed how they were only accompanied by a few outriders. She was an easy target, Oxford thought. The unemployed Londoner had an obsession with guns, spending his time at shooting galleries. When asked why he shot at the queen, he reportedly said: "Oh, I may as well shoot at her as anybody else."

But did he actually shoot a loaded pistol? No bullets were found at the crime scene and Oxford now claimed they only contained gunpowder. His sanity was called into question when friends and family testified that he came from a family of alcoholics and had shown signs of mental instability. What's more, when the police had raided his home they uncovered details of a fictitious military society called Young England, complete with members and correspondence that was all a creation of Oxford's imagination. He was acquitted on the grounds of insanity and sent to an asylum. He served 24 years before being deported to Australia where he lived out his days. His wife never knew she was married to a notorious criminal.

Oxford was the first of seven men who tried to kill Queen Victoria, but she survived and reigned for a record-breaking 63 years.



The queen was pregnant with her first child when Edward Oxford tried to shoot her

DATE OF ATTEMPT
10 JUNE 1840

LOCATION
CONSTITUTION HILL, LONDON, ENGLAND

© Getty Images, UniversalImagesGroup

Benito Mussolini pictured with his bandaged nose after being shot at close range

DATE OF ATTEMPT
7 APRIL 1926

LOCATION
ROME, ITALY

© Getty Images / Topical Press Agency

BENITO MUSSOLINI

When Il Duce escaped death by a nose

How did the daughter of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, who was once a debutante in the court of Queen Victoria, come to shoot Benito Mussolini in the face?

Violet Gibson had converted to Catholicism and moved to Rome to live in a convent. She had experienced mental breakdowns in the past and at one point, she turned a pistol on herself to 'die for the glory of God', only surviving because the bullet hit a rib. The day she decided to turn her revolver on the Italian dictator, she headed to the Palazzo del Littorio, the address of the Fascist Party headquarters. She had read in the newspaper that morning that Mussolini was making an appearance that afternoon. He had just delivered a speech in Rome to the International Congress of Surgeons about the wonders of modern medicine, not knowing he would need the surgeons' assistance soon after. Violet fired her revolver as he turned his head - the bullet hit his nose. She tried to shoot again but the gun misfired.

"Don't be afraid," said Mussolini, "I'm here. This is a mere trifle." But the frenzied crowd dragged Violet to the ground and battered her. Almost lynched but alive, she would spend the rest of her days in a mental asylum.

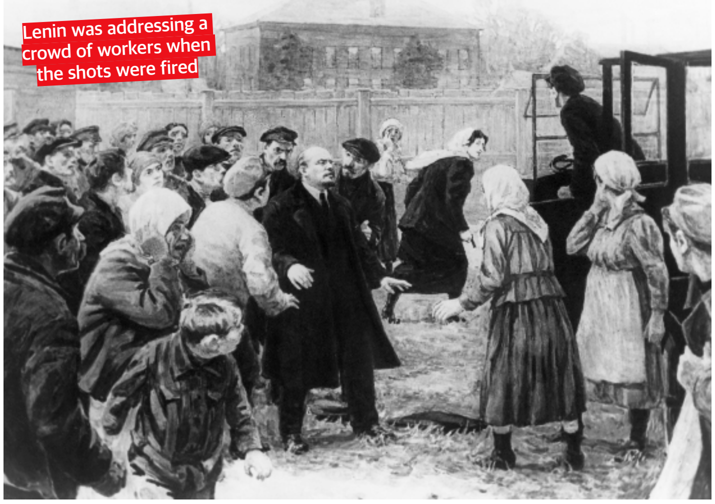
VLADIMIR LENIN

The attempted murder of the Russian revolutionary sparked mass killings

"Today I shot Lenin. I did it on my own. I will not say from whom I obtained my revolver." 28-year-old Fanya Kaplan, a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, signed the confession and claimed the politician Vladimir Lenin was a "traitor to the Revolution". She was found guilty of attempted murder and was executed with a bullet to the head.

Lenin had been speaking at an arms factory in Moscow when Kaplan fired three shots - one passed through his coat, hitting a bystander, while the other two struck his shoulder and his jaw. On the same day, the secret-police chief Moisei Uritsky was assassinated by another member of the opposition Socialist Revolutionary Party. The Bolshevik government retaliated in the extreme. Days later, on 5 September, the Red Terror was sanctioned - a period of political reprisals and mass killings.

It's believed that Lenin never recovered from his injuries - he suffered a series of strokes before dying just over five years later, enabling Joseph Stalin to seize power.

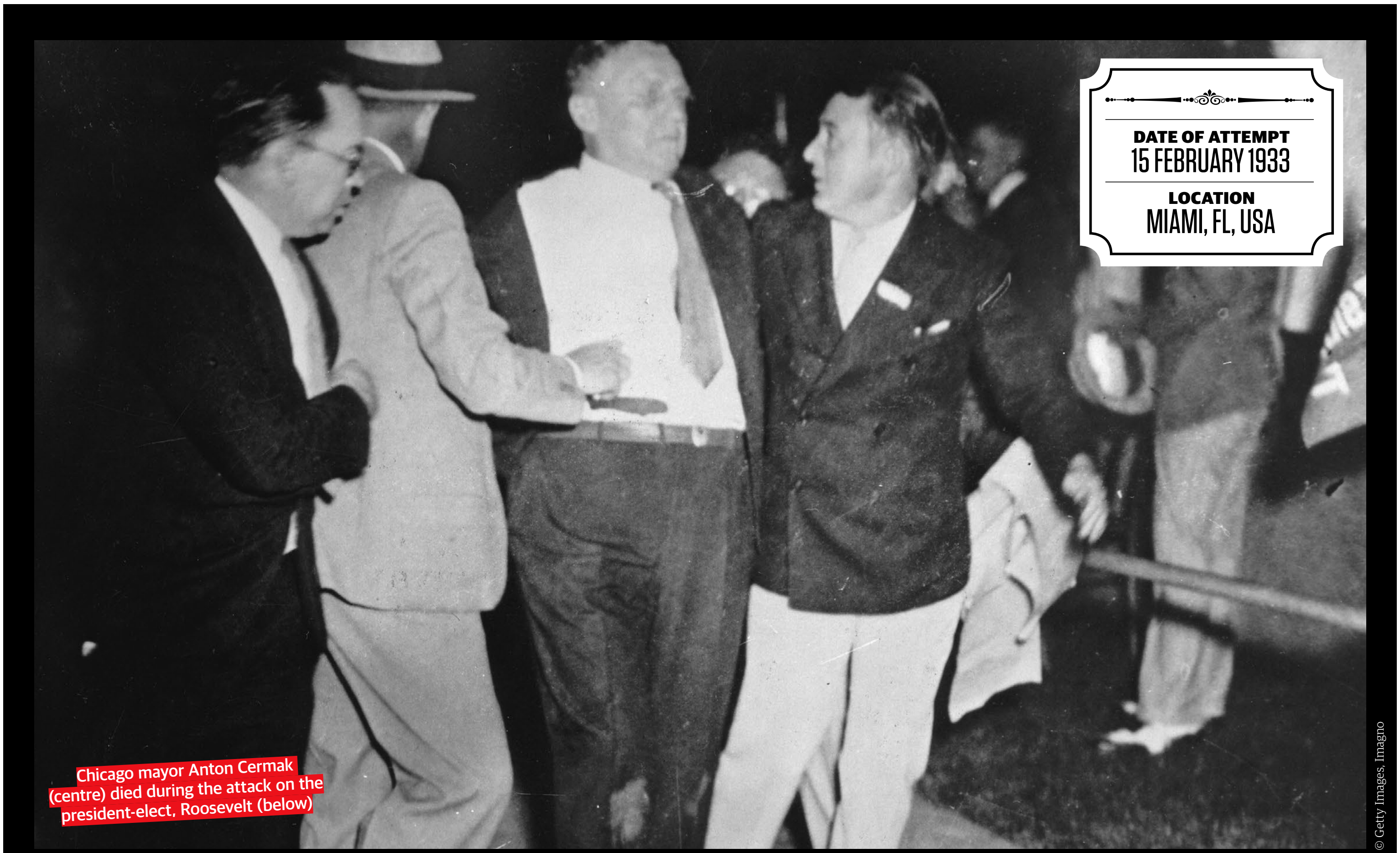


Lenin was addressing a crowd of workers when the shots were fired

© Getty Images / Bettmann

DATE OF ATTEMPT
30 AUGUST 1918

LOCATION
MOSCOW, RUSSIA



DATE OF ATTEMPT
15 FEBRUARY 1933

LOCATION
MIAMI, FL, USA

Chicago mayor Anton Cermak (centre) died during the attack on the president-elect, Roosevelt (below)

© Getty Images, Imagno

FRANKLIN D ROOSEVELT

America's 32nd President was almost killed before his inauguration

It was 9.30pm on 15 February 1933 and President-elect Franklin Delano Roosevelt was giving an impromptu speech from an open car when gunshots rang out, illuminating the 25,000-strong crowd. The shooter was unemployed bricklayer Giuseppe Zangara, who shouted "Too many people are starving!" as he opened fire before being wrestled to the ground by spectators.

He missed his target but five other people were shot, including Anton Cermak, the mayor of Chicago, who had been stood next to Roosevelt. Cermak was rushed to the hospital, but later died from his wounds. Before his death, he had reportedly said to Roosevelt, "I am glad it was me instead of you," which later became the epitaph on Cermak's crypt.

Zangara admitted to his crimes, saying: "I don't hate Mr Roosevelt personally. I hate all officials and anyone who is rich." It's thought that the Italian immigrant's anger was sparked by the Great Depression, which saw millions of people out of work and desperate. He was sentenced to 80 years in prison but when the mayor of Chicago died, he was retried for murder and executed by electric chair on 20 March 1933.

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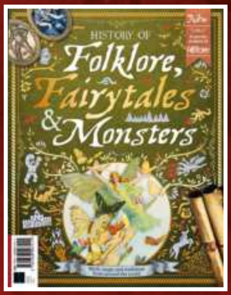
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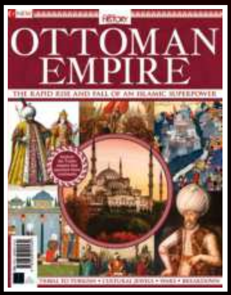
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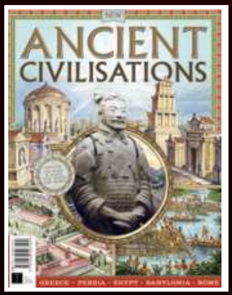
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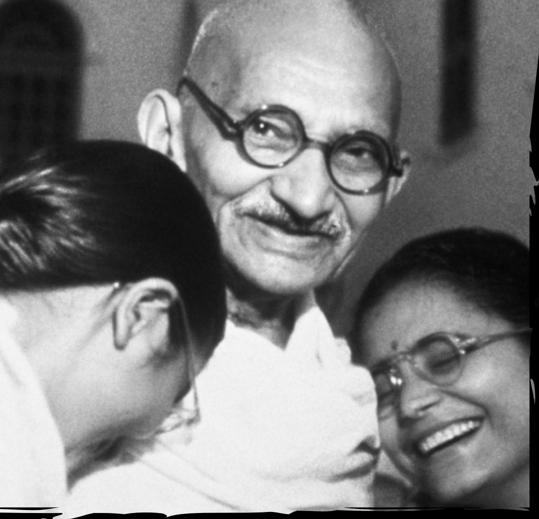

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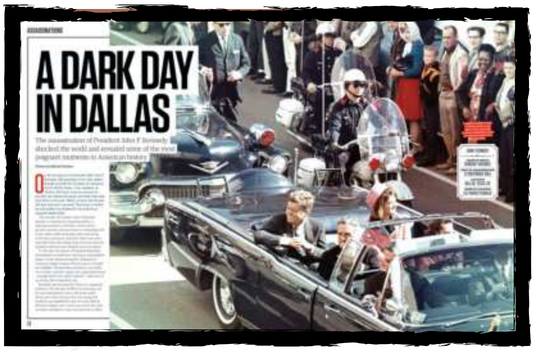

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